

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1995  
Sulicide rate soaring in Estonia  
GOTHENBURG (AFP) — The suicide rate in Estonia has doubled in the last year, according to a doctor who said a number of people had committed suicide in the last few months.  
The doctor, who is a member of the Baltic region's medical association, said the increase in suicides was linked to the economic crisis and the loss of jobs.  
He said that the suicide rate in Estonia was now one of the highest in the world.  
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## Donors to take Boesak to court

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — Scandinavian aid donors Wednesday threatened criminal and civil actions against anti-apartheid campaigner Allan Boesak for allegedly embezzling charity funds. "The donors have not found the explanation given (by Boesak) satisfactory," DanChurch Aid and other donor organisations said in a statement issued after a meeting with Mr. Boesak at the Swedish embassy here to account of missing funds from his Foundation for Peace and Justice (FPJ). Late last year, DanChurch Aid and two other funding organisations in Sweden and Norway engaged Johannesburg lawyers Bell, Dewar and Hall to probe the use of 2.7 million rand (\$762,000) of foreign funds donated to Mr. Boesak's foundation. The report, released Tuesday, said Mr. Boesak "enriched himself substantially" and slammed the foundation's trustees, terming the "cavalier and reckless fashion" in which they carried out their duties as "astounding." In Copenhagen the Danish news agency Ritzau reported that DanChurch Aid Secretary General Christian Balslev-Olesen had said his group had already asked their lawyers to draw up a list of complaints against Mr. Boesak.

# Jordan Times

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## Total wins major Yemeni gas deal

SANAA (AFP) — The French oil company Total has won a major contract to develop Yemeni gas reserves, the president of Total-Yemen, Francois Castellani, said Wednesday. The French company beat off competition from the U.S. companies Hunt Oil and Enron Corporation. It will invest \$5 billion in the project. Mr. Castellani said during a visit to Sanaa. Under the contract, about five million tonnes of liquefied natural gas a year will be produced from 2001 at the northern Yemeni fields of Maareb and Jawf, which have proven reserves of some 450 billion cubic metres. Total will invest \$2 billion in the purchase of methane tankers and \$3 billion in the construction of two gas pipelines — one for local consumption and one for export — as well as a terminal and gas liquefaction plant. Mr. Castellani said. The plant and terminal are to be built at Ras Omran in southern Yemen. Oil experts said here.

## Peres opposes Hamas role in polls

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Wednesday that Hamas should be barred from Palestinian elections because it is intent on destroying Israel and the peace process. His comments came before a meeting here with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. "I don't see why Hamas should participate in the elections because it wants to destroy Israel, to destroy the peace process," Mr. Peres said. "We'll object to three categories: the parties that support terrorism, the parties that want to destroy Israel and the parties that want to destroy peace," he said.

## Settlers fax prayers

HEBRON (AFP) — Israeli settlers have installed a fax machine to send prayers to God in the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron, the Israeli agency Iim said Wednesday. Five hundred Jews have used the free service since it was set up a week ago at the tomb where extremist settler Baruch Goldstein massacred at least 30 Palestinian worshippers in the mosque part of the complex on Feb. 25, 1994. All practising Jews can now ask for help from the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, buried at the site according to religious tradition, without having to travel to Hebron where several hundred settlers live in friction with 120,000 Palestinians. Their prayers are faxed to the Association for the Protection of Holy Sites, which groups Israelis from Hebron and the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba where Goldstein lived. The prayers are then passed on to Talmudic students who read them out on behalf of the sender every morning in the site.

## Israel wants fewer visits

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel has asked foreign governments to slash the number of official trips to the Jewish state, pleading VIP-fatigue after a record 3,000 visits during 1994, a magazine reported Wednesday. An unwanted by-product of the 1993 Palestinian peace deal for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was welcoming 19 presidents or prime ministers, 28 foreign ministers, 11 defence ministers and 30 other cabinet-level visitors. The bi-monthly Jerusalem Report said the foreign ministry and the bureaux of Mr. Rabin and the President Ezer Weizman met to tackle the problem last month. As a result a letter was sent to all embassies in Israel requesting, in diplomatic language, that visits be made only when really necessary and both sides will benefit, the Report said.

## Brown reaffirms U.S. commitment to Jordan, urges more liberalisation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown said Wednesday that Washington was committed to Jordan's economic development and foreign investments in the Kingdom and called for further Jordanian moves towards economic liberalisation that would help American exports to the country.

Mr. Brown addressing reporters after a 90-minute visit to Aqaba where he held talks with four Jordanian ministers, also revealed that Jordan and the United States were negotiating a free trade agreement.

The commerce secretary also called on Jordan to step up its pace of privatisation to attract foreign investment. Privatisation is "the vehicle for economic growth," he said.

Mr. Brown, paying his second visit to Jordan in one year, said his trip to the Kingdom was to "demonstrate the U.S. commitment to enhancing trade with Jordan." He noted that U.S. President Clinton also visited Jordan in October.

"We are interested in investments and developing joint ventures as well as participating in the economic development of Jordan... and (creating) economic opportunities in Jordan," Mr. Brown affirmed. "We know how crucial Jordan is to the future of the region."

President Clinton, during his Oct. 26 visit to Jordan, "made a commitment to be-

gin negotiations on a free trade agreement with Jordan," said Mr. Brown. "I am told today by the (U.S.) ambassador (to Jordan) that the process has begun."

No details of the proposed accord was immediately available. Jordan is among the countries that the U.S. is extending preferential treatment under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), but the Kingdom had not been able to take full advantage of this accord because of a series of restrictions that have to do with local input and origin of raw materials.

During the brief visit he paid to Aqaba after driving along the Red Sea coast from the Egyptian resort of Taba where he attended an unprecedented Arab-Israeli meeting on trade (see separate story), Mr. Brown held talks with his Jordanian counterpart Ali Abul Ragheb, Finance Minister Basel Jarrah, Planning Minister Rima Khalaf and Tourism Minister Abdel Ilab Khatib.

Discussed during the meetings were Jordan's request for American financial aid and the Kingdom's bid to secure debt relief from its Western creditors.

Washington, which is writing off \$702 million of Jordan's debts to the U.S., spread over three years, is also lobbying European governments to extend similar gestures to the Kingdom.

Mr. Abul Ragheb told reporters after the meeting that the subject was covered during the meeting and that the

Jordanian side briefed Mr. Brown on the economic restructuring programme under way in Jordan and also the moves adopted and planned by the government to improve the investment climate in the country.

He added: "We also discussed regional issues of common concern to Jordan and the U.S. as well as issues of bilateral concern, and we expressed our desire that the economy of the region be open."

Mr. Abul Ragheb said businessmen accompanying Mr. Brown had expressed interest in investing in the tourism and industrial sectors of Jordan. Earlier, Ziad Karam, one of the businessmen, announced that he was planning to open a five-star hotel in the Gaza Strip.

The Jordanian trade minister described the Aqaba meeting as "fruitful, constructive and positive," and said it emerged during the meeting that Washington might be willing to increase its contribution to the capital of a proposed Middle East development bank from the \$75 million pledged by President Clinton during his visit to Jordan.

Also reviewed were Jordanian moves to open up the Kingdom's market for increased American exports and amend laws to protect copyright and intellectual property rights.

Mr. Brown, who later left for Kuwait on the fourth leg of his current Middle East

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## Israel-PLO talks fail ahead of Rabin-Arafat summit

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) failed to make any progress on holding self-rule elections at talks Wednesday ahead of a crucial summit, as Palestinian police beat more than 100 hardline opponents of the peace process.

The head of the Palestinian delegation, Saeb Erakat, said he had "nothing to tell" PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat "which could make tomorrow's summit a success."

Mr. Arafat is to meet Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at the Erez crossing between Israel and Gaza as part of efforts agreed at an Arab-Israeli summit last week to keep flagging peace moves alive.

Dr. Erakat warned that the "peace process was on the edge of a precipice" and blamed the deadlock on the "Israeli mentality."

"It is time for Israel and for Mr. Rabin to make up its

mind. Peace or no peace... Rabin cannot continue to act with the authority of an occupier," Dr. Erakat said.

"Honestly I have nothing to tell (Mr. Arafat) which might make his talks with Rabin a success," he said after the negotiations at a Cairo hotel. "I really cannot say that we managed to achieve what we are here to accomplish or that we made any progress."

The negotiations were aimed at setting a date for Israel to withdraw its troops from the West Bank to clear the way for Palestinian elections, originally scheduled for July 1994.

The elections are meant to give more legitimacy to the Palestinian Authority already running the autonomous zones in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho. But the autonomy and the talks themselves have been delayed by persistent violence.

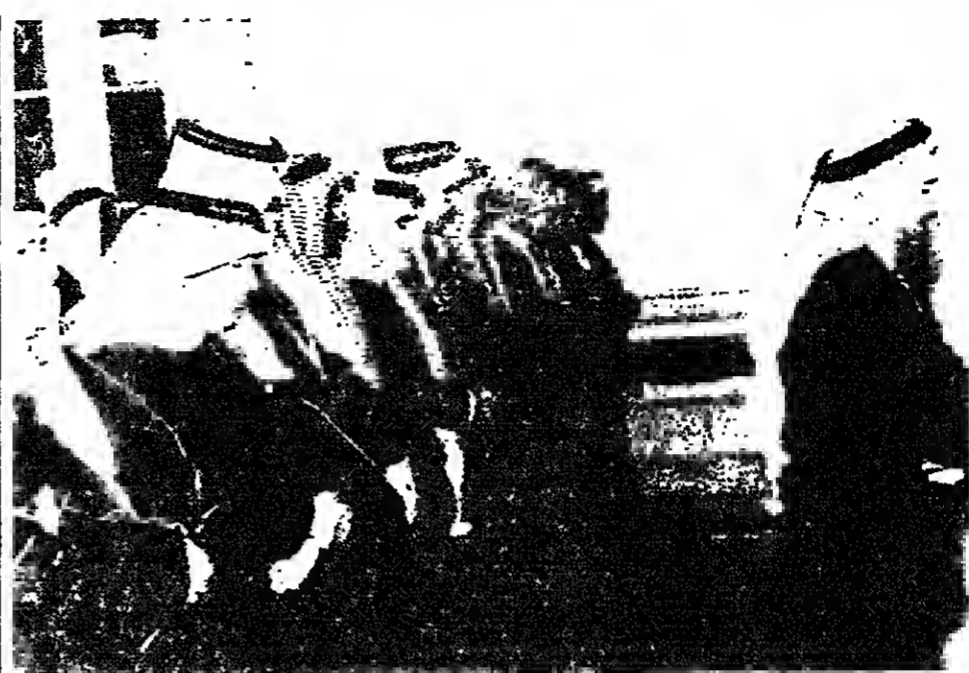
(Continued on page 3)

The Palestinian self-rule authority favours the Israeli idea of separation on the assumption that it means an independent Palestinian state. Mr. Arafat said in an interview published on Wednesday.

Mr. Rabin brought up the separation idea last month. To Israeli thinking, separation means minimising contacts with Palestinians and possibly building fences around Israeli sites in occupied parts of the West Bank.

But Mr. Arafat told the Egyptian government newspaper Al-Ahram: "I agree to complete separation if that is their choice, but on the basis that they withdraw from all Palestinian land and that the separation be political, not for security."

Asked whether he was willing to sacrifice Palestinian jobs inside Israel, a major source of income for the self-



KING HOSTS IFTAR: His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday hosted an iftar at Basman Palace for notables, tribal leaders and heads of public and private institutions in Karak Governorate. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, cabinet members and officials attended the banquet. The King and the guests performed prayers before the banquet (Petra photo)

## Arabs, Israel and U.S. say Mideast is 'open for business'

TABA, Egypt (Agencies) — U.S., Arab and Israeli trade ministers pledged their commitment on Wednesday to a new Middle East, aiming to replace decades of conflict with free trade, regional cooperation and open markets.

An upbeat declaration by the ministers from the United States, Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule areas, meeting in the Red Sea resort of Taba, called for an end to all trade barriers, including the Arab boycott of Israel.

"This meeting, not imaginable a few short years ago, underscores the commitment of the participants to the peace process, and to the goals of economic cooperation and development, trade and development which underpin and are an integral part of that process," the declaration said.

But during a morning of meetings between ministers and businessmen, the region's turbulent political reality and security concerns resurfaced to challenge its optimistic tone.

Arab complaints about Israeli economic dominance and accusations of protectionism overshadowed the early stages of the talks.

"The trade leaders agreed to take all possible steps to remove barriers to free and open markets for trade and investments in the region," said the declaration.

"They support all efforts to end the boycott of Israel," it said, adding "the region is now open for business."

Palestinians have sought to balance calls for an end to the boycott of Israel with pressure on the Jewish state to end its closures of the West Bank and Gaza, which U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown said had a "devastating impact" on the Gaza economy.

"Foremost it is important that this conference adopt the attitude of ending boycott and closures because... the peace process can only succeed with real freedom of passage of people, and products and investment and tourists," chief Palestinian delegate Nabil Shaath told reporters.

Israeli Trade Minister Micha Harish said on Tuesday his country wanted to boost trade and reduce restrictions along the borders but was concerned about militants opposed to peace.

Palestinians, locked into the Israeli economy for a quarter of a century, say that despite their peace deal with Israel, the Jewish state is still acting as in times of war.

They say Israel is not allowing them direct access to Egyptian and Jordanian markets and is even imposing huge customs duties on countries they hope to export from, making trade impos-

THE MINISTERS of trade from Jordan, Egypt, the Palestine National Authority and Israel will meet in Amman in August. They will follow up the implementation of steps required for translating the Taba declaration into practice.

ble. Egypt and Jordan also complain about what they see as Israeli restrictive trade practices. They say Israel is pushing hard to penetrate neighbouring markets but without reciprocating and allowing equal access for Arabs wanting to export to Israel.

Dr. Shaath said the United States had agreed to grant the Palestinians preferential trade status in U.S. markets and was considering the Palestinian request for a free trade agreement.

He said Washington had agreed to allow Palestinians to import U.S. wheat and flour directly, and there was "tentative agreement with the parties to open Palestinian access to international markets through Jordan and Egypt."

Following are extracts from the final communiqué after the meeting: "In an unprecedented event, Egyptian, Israeli,

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## Iraq to revive oil pipeline talks

ANKARA (R) — Iraq's Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahaf will revive talks on pumping Iraqi oil worth hundreds of millions of dollars through a corroding pipeline across Turkey, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday. "The Iraqi minister will visit on Feb. 9-12 and all aspects of Turkish-Iraqi relations will be treated in his talks here," Ferhat Ataman said. "A priority issue of course, will be the temporary opening of the pipeline." The visit will be the first senior contact between Ankara and Iraq since October when a plan to pump oil through the pipeline to prevent it corroding fell through. At that time, Iraq refused to let the United Nations monitor the distribution of food supplies it was due to receive in return for the sale to Turkey of the oil flushed through the 985-kilometres pipeline. But Mr. Ataman said as far as Turkey was concerned the offer was still open. "Turkey had spent great efforts for this project and had advanced it to a certain point when Iraqi objections stalled the issue," he said. "I see no reason why the issue cannot advance from where it was left off with the United Nations."

## Israelis complete pullout today

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Israel completes its withdrawal to newly-marked international borders with Jordan today (Thursday) in line with the Oct. 26 peace treaty signed between the Kingdom and the Jewish state.

A formal ceremony is expected to be held in the Baqura area in the north where the Israeli army will hand over the territory to the Jordanian Armed Forces, which will have its units forward and hoist the Jordanian flag in the returned land.

Also scheduled to be signed today are Jordanian-Israeli agreements on border and security, crossing points, postal services and tourism. These accords, negotiated by separate sub-committees working under a higher committee charged with implementing the treaty, are already initialled but will be formally signed on Thursday.

Under the peace treaty, Jordan and Israel are expected to sign more than 20 agreements, related to various sectors.

The peace treaty calls for three types of accords between the two countries: Those to be finalised in three months, six months and nine months after the ratification of the treaty. The civil aviation and trade accords belong to the six-month group of agreements.

The Israeli withdrawal from Jordanian territory began on Jan. 30, when Jordan took over 340 square kilometres of territory along a 170-kilometre stretch in the south. The area to be returned today is an 830-dunum plot of land on the congruence of the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers.

The Jordanian government has allowed some Israeli farmers to continue their farming activities in part of the area being returned today. The Israelis will be allowed to enter and stay in the area during the daytime under special permits. Night-time entries require another special permit issued by the border security forces. No military activity in the area or any effort to change the civilian nature of the land will be allowed.

Red markers have been placed along the international borders and concrete pillars in their place in the next six months, completing the demarcation process.

An official said meanwhile the precise area of the territory being returned to Jordan under the peace treaty would be known only after definite border markers have been placed and the area is measured with total accuracy.

"The area is somewhere between 340 and 380 square kilometres," said the official, who preferred anonymity. "It could be 350, 360 or 379," he said, adding "the figure that we used to mention was always 380 square kilometres but that was a reference figure, while the minimum was always 340 square kilometres."

"The Jordanian-Israeli borders were never really drawn on the ground or the area; nor had anyone actually measured the actual territory," noted the official. "As such, all figures are subject to change here and there when we actually demarcate and build international borders."

"We will know the actual area that Jordan is getting back only after the completion of all border demarcation, a process that could take several months," said the official.

"But," added the official, "Jordan is getting back every inch of its land as marked in the (British) mandate maps. There has not been an iota of Jordanian compromise there."

## Syria says peace possible in months if Israel is serious

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa said Wednesday that Syria would need only a few months to negotiate a comprehensive peace settlement with Israel if the Jewish state was serious about it.

"Syria is convinced that should Israel be serious about reaching a just and comprehensive peace and a genuine progress on the Syrian track, the matter would not require more than a few months," he declared at a joint news conference with a trio of visiting European Union (EU) leaders.

"But if Israel is not serious, this peace will never be achieved... even if negotiations last for years," Mr. Sharaa warned.

"We hope that the other party is serious in the peace process."

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, who leads the EU delegation, said the peace process was "irreversible and should go forward on the basis of U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, full normalisation between Syria and Israel and the search for security arrangements approved by both parties."

Mr. Juppe met earlier with President Hafez Al Assad af-

ter a session with Mr. Sharaa. An Assad spokesman said the Syrian leader welcomed the European role and stressed that even through Israel's actions give little ground for optimism, Damascus will "not give up the target of a just and comprehensive peace."

The European team arrived Tuesday night seeking a more active European role in the Arab-Israeli peace process, which is cosponsored by Russia and the United States.

Their arrival coincided with a visit here by Russian Presidential envoy Viktor Posoluyuk, who also seeks a high-profile role for Moscow in the Middle East.

Mr. Sharaa also said for the first time that Syria may take part in an international conference due to be attended by Israel.

He said Damascus may take part in a conference organised by the EU to which Israel has been invited if there were "positive developments" in the stalled peace track.

It is the first time Syria has signalled such a move. In the past it has boycotted all forums attended by Israel.

"We have promised to consider our participation in this conference which is not part of multilateral" Middle East

peace talks, Mr. Sharaa said during the press conference.

Mr. Juppe said the meeting between the EU and Mediterranean countries to be held in Barcelona in November would not discuss issues linked to the peace process.

But he added the last meeting of ambassadors, attended for the first time by army chiefs-of-staff, in December had demonstrated "the intransigence of the Israeli party."

Mr. Sharaa said Syria's Ambassador to Washington Walid Muallem had returned to his post on Monday, but that there was nothing to indicate negotiations were about to resume.

The EU delegation, including German State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Hans-Friedrich von Ploetz and Spain's EU Secretary of State Carlos Westendorp, is also scheduled to visit Israel, the self-rule Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

Mr. Juppe expressed Europe's concern over the year-old stalemate in negotiations between Syria and Israel, saying the EU "is fully prepared to play a role in that respect, if that's suitable to the countries of the region."

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## Prince Hassan meets squash team

**HIS ROYAL** Highness Crown Prince Hassan received at the Royal Court Wednesday the national youth squash team which returned recently from Hong Kong where they took part in the seventh Asian Youth Squash Championship. The Jordanian team won fifth place among the 10 participating countries. The meeting was attended by Mohammad Siraj, president of the Jordanian Squash Federation, and the team's coach, Abdul Raouf Saad.



(Petra photo)

## Qadhafi steps up attacks on militants

**NICOSIA (AFP)** — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi has stepped up his verbal attacks on Muslim militants over the past few weeks in a bid to show his country does not support terrorism, diplomats in Tripoli said.

Colonel Qadhafi has targeted fundamentalist militants almost daily in his speeches, mainly Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) whose leaders he blasted as "charlatans and imposters who exploit poor people."

Muslim militants are "carrying out a Western imperialist plan aimed at destroying the Arab and Islamic nation and to distort the image of Islam," he said, arguing that Islam "does not advocate the murder of innocent people."

Most of the fundamentalist leaders live abroad, in Switzerland, in France or the United States, Col. Qadhafi charged.

His attacks come as Libya steps up calls for United Na-

tions sanctions to be lifted, after newspapers reported recently that two U.S. intelligence reports questioned Tripoli's alleged involvement in the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jumbo jet over Lockerbie, Scotland.

"Qadhafi's anger at the fundamentalists is not new," a Western ambassador in Libya said, contacted by telephone from Cyprus.

He recalled that in 1993, Col. Qadhafi branded Muslim militant groups as "traps for idiots" and "movements for apostates."

The Libyan leader then issued a call to kill the militants "without trial, as if they were dogs."

The ambassador said Col. Qadhafi's strongly-worded attacks on Muslim militants are intended to prove that Libya "enjoys stability and rejects all kinds of extremism," in a bid to change the "terrorist" label stuck on his regime ever since he seized

power in 1969.

Col. Qadhafi has been trying to picture himself as a "moderate and a peace-maker" in order to give more weight to his plea for getting U.N. sanctions lifted, the ambassador added.

The U.N. Security Council imposed an air and arms embargo on Libya in April 1992 to force it hand to the United States or Britain two Libyans charged with the Lockerbie bombing that killed 270 people in December 1988.

Col. Qadhafi's regime is also accused of bombing a French airliner over Niger, that claimed 170 lives in 1989.

The U.N. sanctions were tightened in December 1993 to include a ban on some oil-related equipment and a partial freeze of Libyan assets abroad.

Col. Qadhafi has offered to mediate in the war in Bosnia and also in the Philippines,

where he had previously backed Muslim separatists. He has even "let down the Muslim movements that lived off his money in Africa and Europe," the ambassador added.

"He wants to be reassuring for his neighbours, Egypt in particular, which is trying to end Tripoli's isolation while confronting Muslim militancy," he explained.

As for Col. Qadhafi's recent threat to "open the arms depots and borders if Libya is attacked," the diplomat said this was to demonstrate that Tripoli was "blocking the spread of fundamentalism in North Africa."

An African diplomat told AFP that fundamentalism in Libya did not exist.

"After preaching socialism for more than 20 years, Qadhafi is calling for Islamic teachings to be applied but he does not tolerate the slightest exaggeration in demonstrations of piety," he said.

## Jailed militants plotted to kill Mubarak

**CAIRO (Agencies)** — Four Muslim militants jailed for the assassinations of former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981 plotted to kill his successor Hosni Mubarak, judicial officials said Tuesday.

The four are among 51 militants due to stand trial before military prosecutors for having reactivated the armed fundamentalist group Al Jihad, which claimed responsibility for the assassination of Sadat.

Judicial officials said a detailed plan for assassinations, including an attempt on the life of Mr. Mubarak, was found in the home of one of the four militants.

They were accused of reactivating Al Jihad under a new name — Taleh Al Fatah (Vanguard of the Conquest).

The militants were named as Nabil Al Maghrabi, serving a life term of hard labour, Anwar Okasha and Mohamad Al Aswani, jailed for 17 and 32 years respectively,

and Abdul Rauf Al Gesh, who has been held in administrative custody for several months since completing his prison term for involvement in the killing of Sadat.

The man who killed Sadat at a military parade, Khaled Al Islambuli, was hanged in 1982.

The four accused of reactivating Al Jihad told investigators Tuesday that they had also planned a series of attacks on military judges, state prosecutors and strategic targets, including the interior and information ministries.

They said they had passed instructions to militants outside via the wives and sisters of Al Jihad members, who visited them in prison.

The militants were accused of receiving funds from abroad via an Al Jihad leader, Ayman Al Zawahiri, living in Switzerland. He was sentenced to death in a major trial of militants in December 1992.

Some of the group of 51 militants are accused of the murder of a policeman and three civilians in an attack on a Cairo jewellery shop in February 1994.

One of the militants, Yasser Tawfik Ali, is still on the run. He was sentenced to death in absentia for a failed attempt in 1993 to assassinate Egyptian Premier Atef Sedki, in which one person died.

Authorities have arrested most members of Taleh Al Fatah.

The group also claimed responsibility for an abortive assassination attempt on Interior Minister Hassan Al Ali in August 1993 which left five people dead.

The authorities have sentenced 23 Al Jihad militants to death since Mr. Mubarak handed over trials of militants to military courts in September 1992.

**Security chief replaced**

The Egyptian authorities on Tuesday replaced the local

security chief who was the target of an attack by militants last week, security sources said.

Brigadier Abdul Wahhab Dessouki replaced Brig. Ahmad Shendi as head of security in the Nile valley town of Mallawi, the centre of the conflict between the police force and the militant Gamaa Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group), they said.

Seven other officers in the same district have been suspended from active duty on suspicion that they were negligent during the attack last Saturday, they added.

Brig. Shendi was at the police resthouse in Mallawi when a group of militants attacked the compound, killing one policeman and wounding five others. He was unhurt.

A sixth person, a civilian bystander, was wounded in the shoot-out that followed. Civilians in the area said shooting continued for several minutes after the attack.

## Denmark sees positive Iran signal over Rushdie

**COPENHAGEN (Agencies)** — Denmark said Iran's visiting vice-foreign minister made clear on Tuesday that Tehran would not send assassins to carry out the death edict against British author Salman Rushdie.

Iran has repeatedly said the edict is a purely religious matter, unrelated to the Iranian government. Top Iranian leaders have said the government would not actively pursue Rushdie.

After meeting Iran's Mahmoud Vaezi in Copenhagen, Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen said: "I understood from what he was saying that the Iranian government would not take part in executing the edict."

"This is of course not good enough but I do consider it a

positive signal," Mr. Petersen said, adding that Vice-Foreign Minister Vaezi described the edict as a "religious decision."

Mr. Vaezi told reporters the Rushdie issue was one of many which they had discussed. He declined to comment further.

Mr. Rushdie was condemned to death in a religious edict issued in 1989 by the late Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who said the Indian-born Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" blasphemed Islam.

Iranian groups have promised multi-million-dollar rewards to anyone who kills Mr. Rushdie, who was born a Muslim and has been in hiding under British police protection for six years.

Iranian leaders say they are powerless to withdraw the death edict because of its religious nature.

Scandinavian supporters of Mr. Rushdie have been outraged by Mr. Vaezi's two-day visit to Denmark. The Danish parliament's foreign policy committee called off a meeting with the Iranian vice-foreign minister which had been scheduled for Tuesday.

Mr. Vaezi was originally due to make a tour of Nordic countries.

But Sweden and Iran agreed last week to cancel Mr. Vaezi's visit, scheduled for Feb. 7-8. The two countries declined to say why the trip was cancelled.

Relations between Norway and Iran have deteriorated sharply over Mr. Rushdie,

whose Norwegian publisher William Nygaard was shot and seriously wounded in Oslo in 1993.

Iran said meanwhile Sweden had agreed on another date for the Vaezi visit.

The state-run agency, monitored in Cyprus, quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi as saying the invitation had been "postponed due to its improper time."

IRNA quoted the official as saying in an interview with the Farsi-language Iran daily that "the visit will take place in the near future" following an agreement between Iran and Sweden.

Mr. Mohammadi did not say when the visit would take place.

## Drive-in apartments latest craze for Cairo billionaires

**CAIRO (AFP)** — Billionaire Egyptians and Gulf Arabs who crave privacy in Cairo will soon have two new luxuries to enjoy — drive-in apartments and rooftop helicopter pads, designed for those who would rather not meet their neighbours.

The new facilities are on offer in three blocks of flats being built in the select Giza neighbourhood.

The so-called "White Tower" features an elevator to lift a resident in his limousine straight to his apartment, so other drivers cannot honk their horns at him as he gets out in the street.

"We limited ourselves to nine storeys in this tower to

preserve the status of the residents," said a representative of the company promoting the new apartments.

He said each apartment, measuring 1,000 square metres, occupied a whole floor.

He declined to name the buyers, but according to Cairo property dealers the famous belly dancer Fifi Abdo and star singer Amr Diab were the first to buy apartments in the new building for the modest sum of \$2 million.

Despite the luxury, the nearly completed "White Tower" with its old-style balustrades still pales in comparison with its two sister

tower, which will be equipped with rooftop helicopter pads. They are being built by an Egyptian-Saudi consortium.

The 20-storey "Blue Tower" will overlook the Nile while the 30-storey "Green Tower" will offer views over the 50-hectare lush gardens of the zoo.

Luxury shops, a swimming pool, sauna and gymnasium will occupy the ground floors and mezzanines of the two towers.

Only four Egyptians are listed among the residents, the others being mostly princes and sheikhs from the oil-rich Gulf Arab countries seeking a second home.

Duplex apartments measuring 3,200 square metres sold like hot cakes despite their \$13-million price tag.

They feature nine bedrooms, all with en-suite bathrooms, and two dining rooms that can each accommodate a 24-seat table.

Each owner of such an apartment will have an individual entrance and elevator to avoid contact with less fortunate neighbours, who can only afford apartments of 800 to 1,600 square metres.

On the first two floors of the tower blocks an army of maids and chauffeurs will be housed in apartments of 150 square metres.

## Abductor killed in botched kidnapping of Israelis

**TEL AVIV (AP)** — The attempted kidnappings of a leading diamond trader and his daughter ended Tuesday after police traced an abductor's car phone and killed him in a shootout.

Diamond trader Asher Gertler escaped with only a minor injury from the gun battle that shattered the residential Ramat Aviv neighbourhood's tranquil afternoon.

A search was on for a woman who separately kidnapped Mr. Gertler's 18-year-old daughter Keren and held her for several hours in a suburban apartment, said Tel Aviv police chief Gabi Lavi.

The kidnappers had demanded \$2 million ransom.

Keren Gertler is the granddaughter of Moshe Schmitzer, a former president of Israel's diamond exchange and leading figure in the international diamond trade.

"This is a very severe development," said Mr. Lavi, noting that despite ongoing Israeli-Arab violence, ransom kidnappings have been extremely rare here.

The episode began in the morning when Keren, an army conscript, was kidnapped as she drove from her Tel Aviv home to an area base and taken to the suburb of Kfar Sava.

Several hours later a man, dressed in clothing typical of devout, orthodox Jews and wearing a false beard, kidnapped her father at gunpoint from his home, Mr. Lavi said.

Asher Gertler, a former

professional soccer player in his 40s, is also a prominent trader on the exchange.

He was forced to drive his car around Tel Aviv as the kidnapper used a mobile phone to contact his wife and demand ransom.

Hanna Gertler told Channel Two TV the kidnapper said he was infected with the deadly AIDS virus and had "nothing to lose."

Mr. Lavi said police traced the calls and secretly followed the car. Around 3 p.m. the kidnapper suspected something was amiss and threatened to kill Mr. Gertler, who then head-butted and kicked his abductor and tried to escape, Mr. Lavi said.

Six policemen who had been hiding then stormed the car. In the ensuing gun battle, the kidnapper was killed and a policeman and Gertler were slightly wounded, Mr. Lavi said.

The kidnapper's identity was not known.

The other abductor apparently panicked when he lost phone contact with her accomplice. She dumped the hostage, unharmed, onto a country road, and sped off in Mr. Gertler's black Renault.

"I am surprised at the idiot who would attempt such a thing," said police chief Asaf Hefetz. "In the conditions of Israel such a kidnapping cannot succeed."

There was no confirmation that the dead kidnapper had the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

## 2 Jewish dynasties marry in huge wedding ceremony

**BNEI-BRAK (AP)** — After a sea of black coats, the grandchildren of two leading ultra orthodox rabbis took their marriage vows Tuesday, wedding not just themselves but two powerful Hassidic dynasties.

In a gala ceremony drawing more than 20,000 Hassidic Jews from the two clans, Ben Zion Meisles, 18, grandson of the Bobover rabbi from Brooklyn married Haya Eisenster, the 17-year-old granddaughter of the Vishnitzer rabbi.

Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam, the 90-year-old rebbe, or head cleric of the Bobover clan, flew in from his Brooklyn home with some 5,000 of his closest followers for the occasion.

The wedding ceremony took place in the Kiryat Vishnitz neighborhood, where the bride's grandfather, Vishnitzer Rebbe Moshe Yehoshua Hager, heads the neighbourhood of his followers.

"They are kingdoms," said Menachem Friedman, a professor of religion at Bar Ilan University, describing the significance of the event.

"A daughter of one king can only marry another king," he added.

Streets surrounding the Kiryat Vishnitz synagogue were closed for the ceremony, where thousands of men in black hats, long black coats and slacks — the customary garb of Hassidic Jews — gathered. Men poured into the streets, and women separately lined the sidewalks in the pouring rain, unable to

fit into the large hall. Following the ceremony, 10,000 invited guests made their way in a convoy of buses from the ceremony in the Tel Aviv suburb of Bnei Brak to the reception site at the Park Hayarkon fair ground in Tel Aviv.

Two hours after the ceremony, men and women were still streaming into four large reception halls filled with long rows of tables set with fine silver and china.

Two of the halls were designated for men, and two for women because Hassidic religious law does not permit men and women to interact unless they are married.

The men were served wine with their food, while the women's halls contained floor to ceiling closed-circuit television screens to enable them to watch the main celebrations when the men danced around the groom.

Long braided loaves of challah, or bread, shaped in the form of fish symbolic of the current Jewish month of Adar, were placed at the groom's table. Horse and carriage sculptures, carved out of chocolate, graced the women's halls.

The bride and groom, who met three times before the wedding and have not seen each other for nine months, did not join their guests for dinner, but rather dined alone. They made an entrance late in the evening, and the dancing continued until 4:00 in the morning.

The wedding marked the first union of the Vishnitzer and Bobover sects.

## Elevator defies doubters over tomb of Alexander

**CAIRO (AP)** — A Greek archaeologist who says she found the tomb of Alexander the Great in western Egypt has dismissed expert criticism of her findings and vowed to show the world she had made a great historical discovery.

Liana Souvatzki, who has excavated ancient ruins in the remote oasis of Siwa for the last five years, said a team of Greek experts who visited the site on Sunday were in no position to cast doubt on her work.

"They can say anything they like. The tomb, I am convinced, and I assure everyone on this earth, belongs to Alexander the Great," she told Reuters.

Ms. Souvatzki's unshakable self-belief and unorthodox approach to archaeology have raised as many eyebrows as her claim to have solved one of the ancient

world's enduring mysteries — the whereabouts of Alexander's final resting place.

Greek Culture Minister Thanos Mikrotikos said on Monday the experts who visited Siwa to check Ms. Souvatzki's claim had seen nothing to indicate the Macedonian warrior-king was buried there. He said they asked Ms. Souvatzki to present any other evidence she may have "to protect herself and archaeology."

But Ms. Souvatzki, who has pledged to continue her work at the start of next month, said the experts were too hasty in their conclusions.

"If you want to make judgment after visiting the site after only one hour it is very strange," she said. "We will continue and complete our work and when everybody is finished we will be able to

publish everything concerning the inscriptions."

The 47-year-old archaeologist said last week she relied more on her "instinct and intuition" in selecting the site for her excavation at Al Maraji in Siwa oasis than in conventional historical wisdom.

She said she listened to local legends about the area and also found clues in the names of villages around Siwa, the oasis where Alexander was proclaimed a god in 332 B.C. and where she says his body was carried nine years later after he died young in Babylon.

Her team uncovered three stone tablets with Greek inscriptions which she said proved that Alexander's corpse was carried to Siwa by his general Ptolemy I who, after his master's death, founded a dynasty which

ruled Egypt until 30 B.C.

The official Greek team said it saw no inscriptions dating from Ptolemaic times and suggested the site, which they declined to describe as a tomb, was from a much later Roman period.

Egyptian officials were keen to keep alive hopes that Ms. Souvatzki, who found an underground tunnel which she says leads to Alexander's burial chamber, might still be proved right.

"Some (of the experts) are saying they have doubts and some are saying they haven't seen enough," Abdul Halim Noureddin, chairman of Egypt's supreme antiquities council, said.

"Others say it is almost an identical copy of the tomb of (Alexander's father) Philip so they want to keep the door open, just as we do," he said.

## JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 ..... Dipoldo  
18:00 ..... Jaina  
18:30 ..... News in French  
19:30 ..... N.B.A.  
19:45 ..... Planete En Equation  
20:30 ..... Road to Avonlea  
21:18 ..... The Hit Squad  
22:30 ..... News in English  
23:59 ..... Feature film: "An Innocent Man"  
23:59 ..... Bangkok Hilton

### PRAYER TIMES

05:01 ..... Fajr  
06:20 ..... (Sunrise) Duha  
11:59 ..... Dhuhr  
14:53 ..... Asr  
17:38 ..... Maghrib  
18:38 ..... Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Switzerland, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440  
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757  
Trinitarians Church Tel. 622366  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALNDAR

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 62543  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331  
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772911  
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751  
Assam International Church Tel. 652526  
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328  
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195  
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932  
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691  
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY  
AMMAN: Dr. Jam' al Abu Dhiab ..... 738948  
Dr. Bassim Qaddumi ..... 649633  
Dr. Yousef Abdo ..... 699116  
Dr. Yousef Al Faghi ..... 756988  
First pharmacy ..... 661912  
Furdous pharmacy ..... 778336  
Al Asma pharmacy ..... 637025  
Nairookh pharmacy ..... 623672  
Al Salam pharmacy ..... 636730  
Yasouh pharmacy ..... 644945  
Shirwan pharmacy ..... 637660  
Najib pharmacy ..... 847632

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The effect of the depression will end today. Cold weather conditions will continue with skies partly cloudy and winds westerly moderate. In Amman, skies will be partly cloudy with winds northerly and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. ..... 2 / 6  
Amman ..... 10 / 17  
Deserts ..... 2 / 8  
Jordan Valley ..... 8 / 14

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 637111  
Civil Defence Department ..... 661111  
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 630441  
Rescue Police ..... 192, 621111, 637777  
Fire Brigade ..... 617101  
Blood Bank ..... 775121  
Highway Police ..... 843402  
Traffic Police ..... 896390  
Public Security Department ..... 630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 626800  
Price Complaints ..... 661179  
Water and Sewerage ..... 897467  
Complaints ..... 787111  
Complaints ..... 787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 010230  
Central Amman Telephone ..... 637101  
Repairs ..... 637101  
Abdali Telephone Repairs ..... 661011  
Jordan Television ..... 775111  
Radio Jordan ..... 774111  
Water Authority ..... 680100  
Jordan Electricity Authority ..... 815615

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32  
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn ..... 644281/6  
Akilch Maternity, J. Amn ..... 64241/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity ..... 64262  
Malinas, J. Amman ..... 636140  
Palestine St. Clinic ..... 664171/4  
Shimran Clinic ..... 660131  
Al-Muhsen Hospital ..... 845845  
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323  
Zarga National Hospital ..... 666127/9  
The Islamic, Abdali ..... 666127/9  
Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 666127/9  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen ..... 777101/5  
Al-Bashir, J. Asrafich ..... 775111/26  
Army, Marja ..... 891611/15  
Queen Alia Hospital ..... 622403/0  
Amal Hospital ..... 674155  
ZARQA: Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323  
Zarga National Hospital ..... 666127/9  
Ibn Sina Hospital ..... (09)905560  
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999090  
IBRD: Princess Rana Hospital ..... (02)255555  
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272225  
Ibn Al-Nafis Hospital ..... (02)247100  
AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital ..... (03)314111

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)  
06:00 ..... Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)  
09:15 ..... Athens (RJ)  
09:15 ..... London (RJ)  
09:30 ..... Adon, Soana (RJ)  
09:45 ..... New Delhi (RJ)  
09:55 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
10:25 ..... Colombo (RJ)  
10:30 ..... Cairo, Asmara (RJ)  
10:30 ..... London, Berlin (RJ)  
10:40 ..... Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (RJ)  
10:45 ..... Bangkok (RJ)  
10:45 ..... Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)  
20:00 ..... Rome (RJ)  
20:35 ..... Athens, Larnaca (RJ)  
01:30 ..... Jeddah (add) (RJ)

## Other Flights (Terminal 2)

16:00 ..... Muscat, Doha (GF)  
17:00 ..... Sharjah (AH)  
17:00 ..... Riyadh (SV)  
17:15 ..... Doha (GF)  
17:30 ..... Paris, Dusseldorf (AF)  
17:30 ..... Beirut (RJ)  
17:30 ..... London (RJ)  
17:30 ..... Athens (RJ)<



**QUEEN ALIA REMEMBERED:** Today (Thursday) marks the 18th anniversary of the death of Queen Alia who was killed in a helicopter crash along with Minister of Health Mohammad Al Basrah and other officials. The late queen was on her way back to Amman after a tour of southern Jordan which took her to Al Tafleh Hospital where she discussed with officials there medical services offered by the hospital to citizens in the Tafleh Governorate. Queen Alia, who was always a defender of women's rights, is the mother of Their Royal Highnesses Princess Haya and Prince Ali.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Kabariti holds talks with envoys

AMMAN (Petra) — Canada's Ambassador to Jordan Andrew Robinson Wednesday visited the Foreign Ministry and handed Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti a message expressing the Canadian government's desire to enhance the ties of friendly relations with Jordan. The ambassador expressed his country's appreciation of the Jordanian role in the peace-making process and its backing of its policies in the region. The Iranian Ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Dastmaljani also visited the foreign ministers and handed him a message from the Iranian government tackling the future relationship between Amman and Tehran. Mr. Kabariti met separately with the ambassadors of France and Iraq to review Jordan's relations with their countries.

### Srou, PNA speaker confer

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srou conferred in his office Wednesday with Salim Alza'noun, acting speaker of the Palestine National Council. They discussed the question of promoting Jordanian-Palestinian cooperation in parliamentary affairs.

### Jordan, Yemen tackle agricultural ties

SANAA (Petra) — Jordan's ambassador to Yemen, Fayed Al Rahie, met in Sanaa Wednesday with Yemen's Agriculture Minister Ahmad Al Jabali and discussed prospects of bolstering Jordanian-Yemeni cooperation in agricultural fields. The Yemeni minister expressed his country's appreciation of Jordan's gift of 10,000 olive saplings, which were presented to Yemen, and a desire to launch cooperation between agricultural organizations in the two countries. He said that Yemen would be willing to provide Jordan with coffee trees, which abound in Yemen, and would examine a Jordanian request for palm tree saplings to be planted in the palm tree forest in Aqaba.

### Minister, Brazilian envoy discuss ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Brazil's ambassador to Jordan, Fernando Silva Alver, Wednesday called on Minister of Agriculture Mansour Ben Tarif and discussed prospects of cooperation between Brazil and Jordan in agricultural fields. The discussion also covered the prospect of increasing Jordan's exports of fertilizers to Brazil and a visit by Brazilian businessmen to Jordan to pave the ground for organizing a Brazilian trade fair in Amman. The two sides discussed a joint agro-industrial project for the production of soya oil in Jordan.

### Cultural centre planned for Irbid

IRBID (Petra) — Irbid Municipality announced Wednesday that it was embarking on the project of establishing a major cultural centre for this northern city. Fayed Abbadi, who heads a committee that runs the municipality's affairs, said that the cultural centre would be set up in cooperation with the Irbid Development Corporation, noting that a special committee has been assigned the task of finding a suitable site for the projected centre.

### Ramadan charity campaign reaches Irbid

IRBID (J.T.) — The Ramadan charity campaign, which was launched by Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, eight days ago, reaches the northern city of Irbid Saturday. A spokesman for the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), which is spearheading the campaign, said that 750 boy scouts and girl guides have been registered to take part in the Irbid region's campaign. The children, who carry collection boxes, will be collecting contributions needed to finance QAF's programmes to help the needy families in Jordan.

### Tree planting ceremony postponed

AMMAN (J.T.) — The tree planting ceremony planned for Thursday by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, has been postponed due to inclement weather.

### Jordan, Australia discuss relations

CANBERRA (Petra) — The Jordanian parliamentary delegation led by Deputy Taher Al Masri met here Wednesday with Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and discussed Jordanian-Australian relations and issues of common concerns. Mr. Masri reviewed with the Australian minister ways to promote bilateral ties and Jordan's efforts towards the establishment of a just and durable peace. He also outlined to the Australian official the outcome of the Arab-Israeli summit meetings and developments in the peace process. Mr. Evans voiced Australia's backing of Jordan's efforts and desire to bolster Australian-Jordanian ties.

## 2 men die asphyxiated

By Rama Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two people died in separate incidents Tuesday after inhaling carbon monoxide, Civil Defence Department (CDD) and police reports said.

In the first incident in Ma'an, a 46-year-old man, of Egyptian nationality, was found dead in his room, a police official told the Jordan Times.

One of the dead man's fellow employee told police that Ibrahim Sa'ad did not report to work at a car washing station in Ma'an.

According to the report, some of Sa'ad's friends went to check on him in his house. They broke the door, and found him lying on his bed.

A police official told the Jordan Times that preliminary investigations indicated that the victim had left a kerosene stove lit in the room and went to sleep.

He said that the body was transferred to Al Bashir Hospital in Amman for an autopsy.

Also in Zarqa, a 20-year-old man died after inhaling carbon monoxide from a gas stove, CDD reports said.

Mahmoud Hassan, also Egyptian, was taken to Zarqa Military Hospital but was de-

clared dead on arrival.

The attending doctor at the hospital attributed Hassan's death to suffocation.

Meanwhile, a 4-year-old girl was listed in critical condition after suffering from third degree burns Tuesday after a gas stove exploded, police reports said.

The mother of the victim, identified as A.A.M., told police that she heard an explosion in the house and when she went to check the matter she saw her child on fire.

The child, who was identified only as A.A., was rushed to Al Bashir Hospital and was listed in critical condition.

Also on Tuesday, a huge fire engulfed a used cloth shop in Irbid, causing extensive damage but no injuries, CDD reports said.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times Tuesday that the cause of the fire was unknown.

"We have sent a team of experts to investigate the cause of the fire, but until today, we were unable to determine the cause of the blaze," the CDD official said.

The official could not give an estimate of the losses, but said the contents of the huge store were totally burnt.

## Lawyer asks court to annul Jordan-Israel peace treaty

AMMAN (AFP) — A Jordanian lawyer and her mother have appealed to the High Court of Justice here to annul the Israel-Jordan peace treaty on the grounds that it violates the Constitution, legal officials said Wednesday.

Muhiba Haddadin and her mother Fadda say in their appeal that the Oct. 26 treaty is unconstitutional because it "renounces an Arab territory, Palestine, which is an integral part of the Arab Nation."

The two plaintiffs argue that Jordan "cannot renounce Palestine, as the Palestinian issue is the responsibility of all Arabs."

"They are basing their appeal on an interpretation of the first clause of Jordan's Constitution, which states: 'The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is an independent, indivisible and inalienable Arab state and no part (of its territory) can be ceded.'"

However, the assistant public prosecutor in the high court, Fawad Abu Zina, has decided their appeal is not admissible in its present form.

Mr. Abu Zina says the treaty's constitutional legality cannot be questioned because it was studied and approved by a majority of parliamentarians.

Judicial officials also point out that the Jordanian Constitution makes no mention of Palestine as being part of its territory.

In 1988 King Hussein broke off all legal and administrative ties with the Israeli-occupied West Bank, previously considered as Jordanian territory which was captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

The assistant public prosecutor has asked the court to reject the two women's appeal. No date has been fixed for the court's verdict.

## Japanese thank Jordan for aid

AMMAN (J.T.) — Japan's Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama has voiced his nation's appreciation for the relief supplies Jordan sent last month for the benefit of the victims of the earthquake that killed more than 5,000 people in Japan.

The Japanese premier's appreciation of the Jordanian stand was contained in a message he sent to Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker.

Mr. Murayama said that the planload of relief supplies which came as a gift from the Jordanian people had left a very positive impression in the hearts of the stricken people of Kobe and other areas and the Japanese people in general.

He said that the gift was bound to further enhance the friendly relations between the Jordanian and Japanese people.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

### FILM

★ Film entitled "Bird" at the American Center on Thursday at 2:30 p.m.

### PLAYS

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "Yo Who Are Hearing" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 9:00 p.m.  
★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "The Firefighter" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Thursday at 8:00 p.m.

### OLD RECITAL

★ Old recital by Khalid Yousef at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art on Thursday at 8:00 p.m.

### EXHIBITIONS

★ "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Center.

★ Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.

★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also showing another exhibition of Arabic Calligraphy.

★ Exhibition of the works of Lebanese artist Amin Al Basma at Darat Al Fuman. Also showing another exhibition entitled "Phase II-Doors and Windows" by Jordanian artist Ghada Dahdaleh and works by contemporary Arab artists.

★ Educational works depicting the life of "Voltaire" at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of works by Hala Mahayni at the Petra International Hotel in Aqaba.



**CROWN PRINCE HOSTS IFAR:** His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan hosted an iftar banquet at the Army Officers Club here Tuesday, attended by senior officers from the Public Security, General Intelligence and Civil Defence departments. In an address to the guests, Prince Hassan expressed his good wishes on the holy month to the officers and voiced his deep sorrow over the death of

the five police officers in a road accident Tuesday. The Crown Prince stressed the need for more attention on the drivers' part so as to protect human life and save the country from material losses. The five police officers were killed and nine more were injured on the Irbid-Mafraq road when their vehicle collided head on with a trailer travelling in the opposite direction.

Crown Prince Hassan tackled in his address a number of issues of concern to the Armed Forces and the role of the Public Security Department vis-a-vis the recent changes and developments in the Middle East. The Crown Prince emphasised the need for the Armed Forces and the three departments to interact and work together in a positive manner in all matters connected with the protection of Jordanian citizens and the defence of the nation and its interests. He said that the Armed Forces and the security services together form a great institution which would enable the country to enter the 21st century with confidence and renewed will and enthusiasm towards construction and progress and to build a nation capable of confronting challenges at the regional and international levels.



A white blanket of snow covers the capital Wednesday. Inclement weather will improve gradually (File photo)

## Weather conditions to improve gradually; ministry pledges to open roads soonest

AMMAN (J.T.) — A snowstorm which lashed most parts of Jordan Wednesday morning blocked roads and caused many businesses and schools to close.

The storm, which affected most parts of the eastern Mediterranean region, spread a white blanket on most regions above 800 metres in the north, central and southern regions of the Kingdom, according to an official from the Department of Meteorology.

The official said that the storm, which was accompanied by gale-force winds was expected to diminish in force by Wednesday evening and the weather conditions to improve gradually by Thursday morning.

He said that cold, wet weather conditions are expected to continue through Thursday, but snowfall will stop as the low depression will be moving eastward.

The Civil Defence and Public Security departments Wednesday reported the closure of roads in the Shobak-Ma'an areas of the south and the Ajloun-Jerash districts of the north and warned against floods in low-lying regions

and poor visibility, especially in the mountainous regions. The official expected temperatures to drop to one degree centigrade at night and to rise to a maximum of seven degrees during the daytime, with a further rise in temperatures Friday when the weather conditions become more stable but fog will persist in the early hours.

Meanwhile, the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company said Wednesday that it was intensifying its oil products distribution to various regions despite the adverse weather conditions.

A company statement said that since the start of Ramadan, the company distributed 780 tonnes of gas for cooking and heating on a daily basis.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Wednesday visited the central operations room at the Ministry of Public Works and Housing and was briefed by Minister Abdul Razzak Ensur and other ministry officials on the general situation on the roads.

The prime minister said efforts should be exerted for the quick opening of roads as soon as possible.

## Israel-PLO talks fail

(Continued from page 1)

rule areas, he said: "If there was political separation in the sense of setting up an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, we would be prepared to tolerate anything else for the sake of that objective."

Mr. Arafat said the Palestinians could not accept an Israeli proposal to change the linkage between Palestinian elections and the repositioning of Israeli troops away from populated parts of the occupied West Bank.

He said the Israelis had proposed Israeli troops merely stay in barracks on election day, rather than permanently shifting to remote areas before the elections take place.

"We cannot agree to it because this means that whoever was elected would give legitimacy to the occupation," he said.

Mr. Arafat said a four-way summit in Cairo last week had produced nothing to solve the problems between Israel and the Palestinians.

The summit brought together Mr. Arafat, Mr. Rabio, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein.

"So far no progress in this direction came out of this meeting. There is a meeting between me and Rabin tomorrow, which we hope will push the peace process forward so that there won't be a setback in the whole process," he added.

"I appeal to U.S. President Bill Clinton ... and President Mubarak to move quickly to save the peace process," he said.

Mr. Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani said the PLO leader would press Mr. Rabin on Thursday to set a date for an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and for holding elections. He would also urge an end to the crippling closure of the territories.

Israeli chief negotiator Yoel Singer had said earlier the talks on holding long-delayed elections to a self-rule council had achieved "very good results."

Meanwhile in Gaza, Palestinian police staged a second swoop on members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) arresting about 40 more suspects, the group said.

About 100 of the faction's militants have been detained since it claimed the killing of an Israeli security guard in the self-rule Gaza Strip on Monday.

Mr. Arafat's police also kept up the pressure on Islamic Jihad which carried out a January suicide bombing which killed 21 Israelis, surrounding the offices of a weekly paper which supports the group and taking away seven journalists and trainees.

Some 20 Islamic Jihad suspects, including several leaders, had already been arrested since the bombing.

Under the accords launching Palestinian self-rule last May, elections were to be held in July but they were delayed amid Israeli concerns over the safety of 130,000 settlers if its troops redeploy on the West Bank.

Dr. Erakat said the two sides had stumbled over drawing up a list of the outstanding issues in order of priority.

On Tuesday, the Israelis said they would start drafting an agreement on the elections for a self-rule council, which will administer Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza.

But Mr. Singer said no-

thing about a troop withdrawal from the West Bank. The agreement signed by Israel to the PLO in September 1993 specific such a withdrawal, and PLO leaders have repeatedly demand troops pull out before the elections.

But the Israelis have wavered because of the attacks. Dr. Erakat said the PLO will consider an Israeli proposal for the two sides to meet in two weeks in Jericho their talks.

Meanwhile Mr. Arafat has set up a state security court to "handle violations of national security," an official said on Wednesday.

Colonel Hassan Abu Libdeh, director-general of the Palestinian Authority's department of Justice, said Mr. Arafat signed a decree on Tuesday setting up a state security court.

He said the court will be headed and staffed by military personnel yet to be named.

"The president (Arafat) yesterday issued an order setting up a state security court," Mr. Abu Libdeh told Reuters. "Its role will be to confront all cases of violations of national security which threaten the safety and security of our country."

## Japanese premier refuses to quit over quake response

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama said Wednesday he would not step down to take responsibility over his government's bungled response to the Jan. 17 earthquake which devastated the port city of Kobe.

"I am not considering a mass cabinet resignation," Mr. Murayama said during an exhausting day-long session of post-earthquake measures in parliament's upper house.

The remarks came as the opposition was sharpening its knives for a showdown with the Murayama government.

"The Kobe earthquake was a man-made disaster," former prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa told a meeting of his opposition New Frontier Party (NFP). "We must demand he take political responsibility."

NFP officials said they were discussing a proposal for the government to re-draft the state budget for the next fiscal year beginning in April to take into account earthquake measures.

But Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura told

the upper house it was impossible to re-draft the budget bill at this stage because such a process would take months.

The NFP also submitted a vote of no-confidence against the Socialist prime minister, party officials said.

Soon after the earthquake, NFP chief Toshiaki Kaifu said he had no plans to submit a no-confidence motion, but retracted the remark on protests from hardliners in his party.

Mr. Murayama's three-way coalition has only a thin majority in parliament because of perennial squabbles within his own Socialist Party.

Mr. Murayama has come under fire for not quickly sending help to contain damage from the earthquake, Japan's worst natural disaster since the 1923 Great Kanto earthquake which killed 140,000 people in Tokyo and Yokohama.

The death toll from the Kobe earthquake stood at 5,290, with 26,815 people injured, national police said Wednesday.

The shallow "direct hit"

tremor destroyed some 100,000 homes and 50,000 other buildings. More than 220,000 refugees are still stranded in cold and crowded evacuation centres.

The devastation in Kobe swept away myths that Japanese cities were earthquake-proof and exposed huge gaps in emergency disaster relief measures on the part of both central and local governments.

"Don't you feel a little remorse for not being able to limit the damage?" veteran lawmaker Eiichi Nakamura of the Hasei-Kai, an NFP ally, asked Mr. Murayama. "One estimate says that if you were fast, the death toll would have stopped at 3,500."

"I must humbly listen to criticisms (of tardiness) and I do recognise the weight of the issue," Mr. Murayama said in reply.

"That's why we must first carry out reconstruction and then complete the establishment of swift disaster response systems," he added.

Many ruling coalition lawmakers spoke out in Mr. Murayama's defence, saying the bungling was a result of

the complacency of generations of politicians and bureaucrats since World War II.

Last Sunday, the beleaguered Murayama was given more bad news.

The NFP candidate for the governor of northern Aomori Prefecture defeated the favoured candidate from the Liberal Democratic Party, Mr. Murayama's main partner in the ruling coalition.

Mr. Murayama faces unified local polls in April, the first real electoral test for his government. Before that, he must seek parliamentary approval of the state budget and at least two supplementary budgets for reconstruction.

A minor earthquake measuring 3.4 on the open-ended Richter Scale jolted Kobe and its vicinity in western Japan Wednesday, the Meteorological Agency said.

It was the latest in a series of aftershocks following the Jan. 17 tremor in the Kobe area.

Police said there were no reports of injuries or property damage from Wednesday's tremor.



A 17,000-tonne Hanjin-Pusan container ship is on fire in a shipyard in Pusan. Workers were killed and one person was unaccounted for after the fire ripped through the container ship currently under repair in the southern shipyard (AFP photo)

## S. Korean ship fire toll rises to 19

SEOUL (R) — The death toll from a fire in a South Korean shipyard rose to 19 Wednesday as seven seriously injured workers were likely to survive, a shipyard spokesman said.

Fire broke out in the engine room of a container ship owned by South Korea's Hanjin Shipping in the repair yard of an affiliate in the southern port of Pusan Tuesday.

A rescue team found one more body in the ship overnight. All 19 workers have now been identified," the

spokesman said. All were South Koreans.

He said the seven workers reported to be in critical condition Tuesday appeared more stable now. "Doctors said no one was in danger of losing their life."

Police investigators said oil that spilled out of a fuel tank in the engine room may have caused the fire aboard the 17,682-tonne Hanjin Pusan.

"We are still investigating the cause of the fire, but it appears that oil accidentally spilled through a manhole of

the fuel tank in the engine room," a police officer said.

He said workers were welding below the tank.

A shipyard worker at the scene said he heard a loud bang shortly after he saw smoke coming out of the vessel.

The labour union at the Hanjin Heavy Industries Shipyard accused the company of failing to clean the ship properly before it entered drydock. Repair work started Monday, the Hanjin spokesman said.

## Mountaineers repaint Eiffel Tower

PARIS (AFP) — Twenty-five mountaineers began cleaning up the Eiffel Tower, using ropes and harnesses to give the monument its 17th facelift since it was built in 1889. The climbers will use more than 60 tonnes of anti-rust paint and the operation will take 14 months at a cost of 20 million francs (around \$4 million), said Christian Maresquier, director-general of the firm that runs the tourist attraction. They will first strip the 200,000 square metres (2.15 million square feet) of girders and struts, using water and grinders to eliminate rust points. The climbers, who will be able to climb on to a network of 50 kilometres (30 miles) of steel cables tied to the structure, will be paid a bonus for finding rust points in inaccessible places.

## Egypt has one belly dancer for every 5,000 inhabitants

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has one belly dancer for every 5,000 inhabitants and they contributed \$14.7 million to the tax coffers last year, the weekly Sabah El Kheir said. The weekly, citing tax office statistics, said the country had 12,000 professional dancers. The top 100 earn up to \$4,400 a night, working in hotels or at society weddings. At the other end of the scale, beginners and less skilled dancers are paid between \$4.5 and \$29 a night.

## Student goes to jail for stealing a duck

Lagos (AFP) — A 17-year-old Nigerian student was sentenced to a year in jail for stealing a duck, a news agency reported. His feathered loot in hand, Garba Mohammad was on his way to a market when the owner caught up with him and subdued the accused thief with the help of passers-by, the Nigerian News Agency (NAN) reported. Mohammad pleaded guilty before a court in the northern state of Bauchi but asked for leniency, saying it was his first offense. The judge refused, saying a year behind bars should teach Mohammad a lesson. The duck was worth the equivalent of \$5, the news agency said.

## Korean-born conductor wins French awards

PARIS (AFP) — Myung-Whun Chung, fired last year as orchestra conductor at the Paris Opera, scooped three out of 13 awards Tuesday at the French musical equivalent of the Oscars. An audience of 2,100 of his peers in the music industry honoured Chung as best orchestra conductor of 1994, as well as for the best classical French recording and best lyrical production. Chung, born in South Korea and now a U.S. citizen, was fired from the opera last year in a contract dispute.

## 'Love' is not proper telephone talk

LEEDS, England (AFP) — The northern England city of Leeds has instructed municipal telephone operators not to refer to people on the phone as "love," a commonplace British diminutive judged too familiar for city business. A city spokesman said the advisory followed complaints from several members of the public who thought city operators were using "too much familiarity" on the phone. "As a result we have asked them not to say 'love' when they feel it could offend," he said. At least one operator objected, saying: "Calling someone 'love' is not an insult. It's just the way we talk. Preventing us from doing it is completely ridiculous."

## Sailors illegally 'give away' old TNT

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (AP) — Police seized 35 kilograms (77 pounds) of TNT in a car trunk and said sailors had illegally given the explosives away after a night of drinking, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported. The ammunition had been aboard a Pacific Fleet ship docked in the Russian Far East, along with dozens of tonnes of old weapons.

## Ramos: Chinese troops occupying Philippine reef in Spratly Islands

MANILA (AFP) — President Fidel Ramos said Wednesday he would lodge a protest with Beijing after the discovery of Chinese warships and structures on a reef claimed by the Philippines in the dispute Spratly Islands.

However, the Chinese embassy spokesman here, Deng Xijun, insisted that the structures were merely to shelter Chinese fishermen and denied earlier reports that a group of Filipino fishermen were held by Chinese troops in the area last month.

Gen. Ramos said that "the Department of National Defence has verified that vessels from the People's Republic of China are presently in the vicinity of Pangasinan Reef in the Kalayaan Island Group."

"Certain structures have also been built on Pangasinan Reef and we have pic-

tures of this," he said in his weekly news conference, referring to reefs claimed by the Philippines.

He said Manila "views these actions taken by elements identified with the People's Republic of China as inconsistent with international law and the spirit and intent of the 1992 Manila ASEAN declaration on the South China Sea."

Gen. Ramos said the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) had already submitted a "very firm aide memoire" to the Chinese ambassador in Manila before the filing of a formal protest.

Mr. Deng admitted receiving the aide memoire, but said the buildings were "shelter structures for fishing vessels set up on Mischief Shoal by China's local fishing administrative department."

The Manila declaration was signed by the Association

of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as China and other Spratly claimants adhering to joint development in the area and peaceful dialogue to solve the dispute.

Mr. Ramos said the Philippines also "has reason to believe" claims by a group of Filipino fishermen, who said they were detained by Chinese troops on a shoal in the area for one week last month.

Mr. Deng said the Chinese Navy "never detained fishermen in the waters in Nanhai Islands for established a naval base in Mischief Shoal."

The Spratlys — or Nanhai Islands as China refers to them — are a string of small islands in the South China Sea, being claimed in whole or in part by ASEAN members Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines, as well as by China, Vietnam and Taiwan. ASEAN also groups Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

## Burmese troops pound rebel base

BANGKOK (AFP) — Karen rebel forces entrenched at their Kawmoora Base were pounded by Burmese artillery overnight prior to an infantry assault early Wednesday, Karen sources said.

"The shelling resumed at eight o'clock (Tuesday) night and went on all night," said a Karen source reached by telephone in the Thai town of Mae Sot near the Burmese border, close to Kawmoora.

The source said there were "between 300 and 400 explosions in one hour."

"It was not like the other nights, it was many, many shells, not sporadically, but continuously."

Thai police in Mae Sot confirmed the bombardment of the camp, defended by an estimated 800 Karens, was particularly violent.

Another Karen source contacted in the town said Burmese forces "launched a ground attack this morning at 7:30, but they could not get close to the front lines, they had to go back."

"We heard a lot of gun-fights and heavy machine-guns firing," the source said without giving any details on casualties.

The Kawmoora camp is the main base remaining in the hands of the Karen rebels since Burmese forces overran their main headquarters at Manerplaw on Jan. 27, about 150 kilometres (94 miles) farther north.

Well defended by bunkers and machine gun nests, Kawmoora was attacked unsuccessfully in 1992 by government forces which incurred heavy losses.

Meanwhile, on the northern front, a round 50 kilometres north of Manerplaw, three government battalions — about 1,500 men — threatened the student rebel base at Dagwin, a spokesman for the Burmese students said from the border.



Prosecutor Marcia Clark (right) shows a bag containing the sunglasses of Judith Brown to witness Karen Crawford during the afternoon court session in the O.J. Simpson double murder trial. Ms. Crawford was the Mezzaluna Restaurant manager on duty the night Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman were murdered (AFP photo)

## Nicole Simpson's neighbour tells of dog's plaintive howl in the night

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A dog howled mournfully into the night the evening Nicole Brown Simpson was slain, a neighbour recalled as prosecutors in the O.J. Simpson case tried to pinpoint for the jurors the time of two bloody murders.

With no known witnesses to the slayings of Ms. Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman, and in a case where minutes are crucial, prosecutor Marcia Clark Tuesday called to the stand Pablo Fenjves, who heard a dog's "plaintive wail" as he watched the 10 o'clock news June 12.

Mr. Fenjves, whose home is across an alley from Ms. Simpson's, said he heard the barking coming from the area of her condo about 15 to 20 minutes into the newscast.

"It sounded like a very unhappy animal," said Mr. Fenjves, who like most of the day's witnesses had testified last summer at Simpson's preliminary hearing.

Prosecutors contend the barking came from Ms. Simpson's Akita, which left bloody pawprints around the murder scene.

The timing is important: Prosecutors contend Simpson killed the victims about 10:15 p.m., giving him time to re-

turn to his estate, clean up and climb into a limousine for the airport just after 11 p.m., he was headed for Chicago on a business trip.

The defence has said Simpson was practicing his golf swing in his yard when the slayings occurred.

Simpson, 47, is the most prominent American accused of murder in recent years. His trial has riveted the American public, who recall his college and professional football exploits and work as an actor and television sports commentator. Simpson has pleaded innocent.

Mr. Fenjves said that after hearing the dog's wails, he went downstairs to work in his soundproof office. When he returned to his bedroom at 11 p.m., he said, he could still hear the barking. He said the dog may have been wailing when he fell asleep about 11:20 or 11:30.

Prosecutors also sought to establish a timeline for murder by calling to the stand employees from Mezzaluna, the restaurant where Goldman worked as a waiter and where Ms. Simpson ate her final meal hours before their slayings.

Karen Lee Crawford, who was working as a manager that Sunday night, described

a lost pair of glasses that led Mr. Goldman to his death, and began to cry when prosecutor Marcia Clark showed black slacks and a white dress shirt.

"It's Ron's shirt and pants," Ms. Crawford said. In the audience, Mr. Goldman's stepmother and sister also broke into tears.

Ms. Crawford said she received a call at about 9:37 p.m. on June 12 from Ms. Simpson's mother asking about her glasses, which she had dropped in the gutter outside. Ms. Crawford said she put the glasses in a white envelope, marked it "Nicole Simpson prescription glasses" and sealed it.

Less than 10 minutes later, Ms. Simpson called and asked to talk to Mr. Goldman, Ms. Crawford said. A few minutes later, Mr. Goldman asked Ms. Crawford to give him the glasses, she said. Ms. Simpson's condo is about a 10-minute walk from Mezzaluna.

"He told me he was going to drop the glasses off at Nicole's," Ms. Crawford said. "He left at about 10 minutes to 10."

The anonymous, 12-person jury now has nine blacks, one white and two mixed-race members.

## Gen. Powell again keeps them guessing about his plans

WASHINGTON (AP) — First came what the man in the audience described as a strictly military question. "Good," said the guest of honour. But the next person to reach the microphone couldn't resist: "Will you run for president?"

Just another day in the life of Colin Powell, retired U.S. army general, fulltime spouse, aspiring author, part-time lecturer — and central player in one of the United States' more intriguing political sagas.

Felding questions after a Monday night speech, Gen. Powell said he'd much rather be president than a presidential candidate, given the rigours and scrutiny of modern campaigns.

But before one interprets that as reluctance to run, Gen. Powell suggests it "might be entertaining to have an independent person in 1996 to throw some more fun into the game."

Just don't assume he plans to be that candidate.

"There is no particular passion in me for politics," Gen. Powell said, "but I don't feel any need to rule it out."

Of course, many Americans would love to know the answer.

Two unauthorised "draft Powell" committees are registered with the Federal Election Commission. Another claims already to have coordinated in almost two dozen states.

Then there's the handful of candidates already seeking the 1996 Republican nomination. Gen. Powell easily scores higher than any of them in opinion polls, a testament to his remarkable public image and, perhaps, to his silence on a host of divisive issues.

Sen. Bob Dole, majority leader in the U.S. Senate, is quick to say yes when asked if Gen. Powell would make his list of potential vice presidential running mates.

Sen. Dole said at the weekend that he met with Gen. Powell recently but didn't ask him about the No. slot — or whether he's a Republican, for that matter. But Sen. Dole chuckled and said Gen. Powell knows a good deal about recent polls: "He knew he was running ahead of me."

President Bill Clinton wouldn't mind knowing Gen. Powell's plans, either. His 1996 re-election odds are long to begin with, never mind the prospect of having a bona fide American hero somewhere on the Republican ticket or mounting a serious independent run.

Gen. Powell's last military job, which brought him fame around the world, was as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the 1991 Gulf War.

He won't come right out and say so, but it appears unlikely he will enter the 1996 primaries leading to the November elections.

The first draft of his book is due at the publisher in a month. After its publication in September, he's committed to a promotional tour to take him close to the holidays.

The son of Jamaican immigrants, Gen. Powell was born in New York City and credits the 1964 Civil Rights Act for helping him rise through the military ranks. Perhaps a clue to whether he will seek elective office, however, is his expressed

worry that race relations are "starting to slip" in the United States.

Republican pollster Bill McInturf said Gen. Powell is running out of time even to enter primaries, let alone set out on an independent bid. Both require huge amounts of money and an organisation big enough to qualify to go on the ballot.

Gen. Powell doesn't seem the type to be rushed. For all his jokes about his wife, Alma, ordering him to fix clogged drains and refusing to make his lunch, Gen. Powell, 57, appears to be very much enjoying retirement and in no hurry to figure out his political allegiances.

"I'm still developing a political philosophy," he said Monday night, noting that he has voted in the past for Democrats and Republicans and is comfortable as an independent.

"I don't know if it would ever fit either of the two parties," Gen. Powell said. "I checked the constitution — you don't have to belong to a party."



Princess Diana (left) receives a basket of visit at a mental health centre in Tokyo cookies from Yoko Ono (right) after her Wednesday (AFP photo)

## Mountaineers repaint Eiffel Tower

## Socialist Jospin bounces up to trail Balladur

PARIS (AFP) — Mountaineers repainting the Eiffel Tower are using the occasion to give the monument a facelift since it was built in 1889. The climb will take 14 months, costing 20 million francs (around \$4 million), says director-general of the tower, Christian Mérieux.

The tower will be repainted in a brown paint and the climbing will take 14 months, costing 20 million francs (around \$4 million), says director-general of the tower, Christian Mérieux.

## Egypt has one belly dancer for every 5,000 inhabitants

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has one belly dancer for every 5,000 inhabitants, according to a poll credited Mr. Baladouny. The poll found that there are 14,000 dancers in a country of 50 million people.

## Student goes to jail for stealing a duck

LAGOS (AFP) — A Nigerian student was sentenced to a year in prison for stealing a duck from a school.

## Korean-born conductor wins French award

PARIS (AFP) — A Korean-born conductor won the prestigious French award for best conductor.

## 'Love' is not proper telephone talk

LEEDS, England (AFP) — A woman was fined for using the word 'love' on a telephone.

## Sailors illegally 'give away' old TNT

VLADIVOSTOK (AFP) — Sailors were caught giving away old TNT to a local resident.



French Communist Party candidate for the presidential elections Robert Hue receives a warm embrace from a sympathiser during a campaign stop in Bordeaux, southwest France (AFP photo)

PARIS (R) — Socialist candidate Lionel Jospin pulled into second place behind conservative Prime Minister Jacques Chirac in the run-up to this weekend's French presidential election.

Mr. Jospin, chosen at a weekend, has fallen to more than 60 per cent in the conservative premier, Mr. Chirac, who is the overwhelming favourite in the opinion polls, officially announced his candidacy last week for the April 23-May 7 runoff.

Mr. Jospin's rapid rise, from a first opinion poll since the 1988 election, was picked by the 200,000 square metres of the network of steel cables that will be able to chop the structure, will be a bonus for finding an inaccessible place.

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## Peru rejects Ecuador proposal

QUITO (AFP) — Peru rejected an Ecuadorian ceasefire proposal in its nearly two-week border war, amid reports that a Peruvian plane bombed an Indian village far from the area of conflict.

According to Ecuadorian television, the aerial attack targeted Caramanza, some 31 miles (50 kilometres) from the unmarked swathe of Amazon jungle both countries have been fighting over since Jan. 26. No victims were reported.

Peruvian Foreign Minister Efraim Goldenberg Tuesday said the Ecuador ceasefire proposal made during peace talks in Rio De Janeiro was "absolutely impertinent."

Mr. Goldenberg said Lima rejected the offer "ipso facto" because Quito had demanded that it be allowed to maintain control of two border posts: Tawintza and Base Sur. Peru has claimed control of the two posts.

He stressed, however, that "it would be a mistake" to break off peace negotiations, adding that he was hopeful the border war would end quickly so both countries could resume their "friendly relations."

There was no immediate reaction from Quito on Peru's rejection of its proposal, although Ecuadorian President Sixto Ballen-Duran stressed earlier in the day that the two border posts and eight others in the disputed jungle area were inside Ecuadorian territory.

Ecuador's top negotiator, Deputy Foreign Minister Marcelo Fernandez De Cordoba, gave Ecuador's proposal to mediators from the United States, Brazil, Argentina and Chile in Rio De Janeiro late Tuesday.

"Ecuador's proposal is a big step backward from the declaration negotiated in Rio De Janeiro between Ecuador and the guarantor nations," said Peru's top negotiator, Deputy Foreign Minister Eduardo Ponce, referring to Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States.

The four nations are guarantors of a 1942 treaty establishing the Peru-Ecuador border. Peruvian and Ecuadorian forces have been fighting over a 78-kilometre (48-mile) unmarked stretch of border for nearly two weeks.

On the military front, the Ecuadorian high command said its forces were holding fast to positions in Tawintza and denied reports from Lima that they had fallen back in fierce fighting.

"All our positions are unchanged and we have successfully repelled all attacks launched by Peruvian patrols," the Ecuadorian High Command said in a communique.

Teleamazonas television said the Peruvian aerial attack on Caramanza, which occurred Monday, was preceded by parachute flares dropped over the area to illuminate the target.

Witnesses quoted in the report said the Peruvian plane dropped one bomb and strafed the village with machinegun fire, destroying several trees and leaving a gaping hole in the jungle.

"Our house started to tremble and we had no idea what was going on," one witness told the television station.

No explanation was given for the attack on a village so far removed from the border war — Peru has not confirmed the attack, but the mostly indigenous inhabitants of the area are split on their allegiance to either Peru or Ecuador.

A large tract of Amazon jungle in northeastern Peru was occupied during a war between the two neighbours in 1941 and adjudicated to Peru in the Rio Protocol.

The Ecuadorian president said on his return late Tuesday from a three-day tour of Argentina, Brazil and Chile that "our nation is in the hands of the four guarantors of the Rio Protocol."

## Militiamen flee as Rwandans return home

NGENDA, Rwanda (R) — As U.N. agencies organise the return home of Rwandan refugees and close camps for the displaced, Hutu militiamen responsible for genocide in Rwanda are heading the other way — away from Rwanda.

Officials from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the first mission from Burundi, ferrying 87 Rwandans Tuesday from a refugee camp to their homes, was so successful and another convoy would leave Burundi Thursday.

Peasants and ordinary Hutu Rwandans are gradually being persuaded to return home, despite fear of reprisals by the Tutsi-dominated government for last year's genocide of up to a million people, who were mainly Tutsis or their Hutu allies.

As the convoys start in Burundi, the U.N. is closing camps in southwest Rwanda where Hutus fled from other parts of the country, and where the notorious Interahamwe militia established itself after the Hutu-led government fled last July.

And in eastern Zaire, where more than a million refugees live in squalor, the U.N. expects to deploy military advisers this week to help the Zairean army impose order and help repatriation.

Officials say that faced with a repatriation programme that is finally gaining steam, cutting their power base of frightened refugees, Hutu militiamen are fleeing.

In southwest Rwanda, more than 30,000 displaced from two of the biggest camps have returned home and the camps were closed. But up to 20,000 more moved to other sites and as many as 5,000 others have crossed into Burundi.

"They have blood on their hands and don't want to go home. But refugees in Burundi are largely innocent peasants and for them the lure of the land is strong," said one U.N. official.

"It's coming up to planting time and they want to get home to their crops."

"I am coming back because UNHCR have told me it is safe," Euphrasie Nyirabenda, one of the 87 who returned from Burundi Tuesday, told Reuters.

"Also in Magera, I did not have enough food and was treated badly."

Shepherded off trucks inside Rwanda, the group lined up with their meagre belongings — jerrycans, cooking pots and bags of clothes — as Rwandan troops searched them for arms.

The border procedures took two hours. Returnees then boarded more trucks and drove 20 kilometres through desolate countryside of untended fields of Ngenda, their home commune.

A U.N. spokesman in Geneva incorrectly said Tuesday 97 went home.

UNHCR officials remain concerned about the security of the returnees but said growing international troops and monitors and the cooperation of local authorities were reassuring.

Most of the estimated two million Rwandans still in camps say fear of reprisals from Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated army is the main problem stopping them going home.

and end in March, Mr. Rao has already lost three out of four state polls and faces an uphill task in six more, including Maharashtra.

"Maharashtra's election is very crucial for the Congress Party's future," said Mr. Pawar, the only Congress leader to have staked a claim to the prime minister's post against Mr. Rao, in June 1991.

"If anything goes wrong here, it will have repercussions directly in parliament and probably there might be demand or pressure for early elections."

"It will be really difficult for anybody to face this type of demands."

Mr. Pawar, a former national defence minister, said any further humiliation in the regional polls could signal serious difficulties for

both the former communist left and the reformed neo-fascist right. It also advocated an alliance with the centre-right Forza Italia party of former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who resigned on Dec. 22 after his right-wing coalition collapsed.

Leaders from the party's left wing abstained from Tuesday night's vote to avoid — at least for the time being — an outright split, party sources said.

They earlier had backed a bid by economist Romani Prodi, former chairman of Italy's giant IRI state holding company, who said last week said he was ready to head a centre-left coalition to challenge a centre-right alliance led by Mr. Berlusconi in the next general election.

Mr. Buttiglione sharply criticised the left-wing's statement of support for Mr. Prodi, who was quickly touted in the press as the "anti-Berlusconi" who might be the only national figure able to win wide-ranging support.

The PPI's National Council, the supreme party organ which is broader than the national leadership, was to meet in Rome Thursday to discuss the moves.

Before ending the session, the PPI left wing won a concession by getting the leadership to tone down a statement on Mr. Prodi.

Prosecutors ruled he had acted in self-defence. Mr. Skorochkin said he had been attacked by the local mafia for refusing to pay protection money and that he feared for his life.

Mr. Rybkin said last week that the Duma's leadership had offered protection to Mr. Skorochkin, a businessman who shot dead a Georgian last May whom he said had been threatening him. A woman passer-by was also killed in the shooting.

The flamboyant nationalist urged the Duma to create a security force to protect deputies.

He also demanded the res-

## IRA denies planting bomb in Northern Ireland

ATLANT (R) — A powerful IRA bomb was defused in the town of Newry over the weekend and the IRA's political spokesman, Sinn Fein, denied the help of a separatist group was involved.

"The IRA is systematically using intimidation in order to signal its ability to resume its terrorist campaign and extract a further series of concessions," he said.

It was the second bomb defused using the IRA's hallmark semtex explosive since the IRA and its Protestant loyalist foes declared ceasefires last year to enter political talks.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for planting the device, which was left at the entrance to a shopping centre and contained 300 grammes (one pound) of the powerful semtex.

A similar bomb was found in Enniskillen, in December. Police said an anonymous caller rang at 2130 GMT

attempted bombing was the work of breakaway IRA factions unhappy with the pace of the peace process since their Sept. 1 ceasefire last year.

Protestant loyalist guerrillas are also known to have small quantities of the Czech-made semtex and used it in two attempted bombings in Dublin last year.

The discovery was made the day after Irish police said they had found 12,000 rounds of IRA ammunition hidden in boggy ground in the Irish Republic 80 kilometres west of Dublin.

Britain says it wants the IRA and its loyalist foes to surrender or decommission their arms before either group can be invited to take part in new all-party talks on a political settlement for Northern Ireland.

But both the IRA and the loyalists say they will only discuss the surrender of arms when progress has been made on a settlement and when there are signs that Britain will free hundreds of prisoners jailed for security offences.

British officials have hinted that they might soften their stand on arms if the guerrillas hand over their stocks of semtex, which is a difficult explosive to store.

Semtex bombs were used to devastate London's financial city district in the 1990s and were also used in an attack on British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's cabinet in 1984.

The Northern Ireland peace process is currently marking time waiting for Britain and Ireland to agree on the next constitutional steps they might take towards a settlement.

But the SLD, which on Poland's political spectrum now wears a centre-left social democratic mantle, had also distanced itself from Mr. Pawlak, accusing him of not pressing home liberal economic reforms.

The SLD threatened earlier this week to call a vote of no confidence in Mr. Pawlak, prompting his decision Tuesday to step down.

Under Polish law, the parliamentary majority must now file a formal motion against Mr. Pawlak within a week and then approve Mr. Oleksy's nomination as prime minister.

Once accepted by the deputies, Mr. Oleksy will have 21 days to form a government that must in turn be approved by Mr. Walesa.

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## Italy's former Christian Democrats propose new 'centrist' grouping

ROME (AFP) — Italy's former Christian Democrats have proposed building a new "moderate centre" grouping to rally broad support in the next election, offsetting a move for a centre-left coalition that sparked party infighting.

The national leadership of the Italian Popular Party (PPI), the former long-ruling Christian Democrats decimated in the country's "clean-hands" corruption probe, backed late Tuesday a document by its leader Rocco Buttiglione, advocating a "moderate centre."

Mr. Buttiglione's proposal said the new "moderate" group would be distinct from

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Mr. Zhirinovsky said the LDPR, which became the largest single faction in the Duma after elections in 1993, would play no role in parliament until the two men were fired. He has announced boycotts before but always returned quickly to the chamber.

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## Zhirinovsky urges sackings over killing

MOSCOW (R) — Ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky Wednesday demanded the dismissal of Russia's interior minister and parliamentary speaker over the kidnap and killing of a deputy from his Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR).

Mr. Zhirinovsky told the State Duma lower house that Interior Minister Viktor Yerin and the chamber's chairman, Ivan Rybkin, had failed to protect Sergei Skorochkin, a 33-year-old deputy who was abducted and shot in the head last Thursday.

The Duma — which observed a minute's silence in tribute to Mr. Skorochkin — was expected to debate and vote on his demands later Wednesday. But the govern-

ment will not be obliged to act, whatever the Duma's decision.

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## Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975

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## Patrols that go nowhere

TWO DAYS before Tuesday's tragic accident, in which five police officers were killed and nine more injured, a hit-and-run trailer driver ran over a ten-year old boy crossing a street in Ramtha, killing him instantly. While the two accidents are a grim reminder that traffic problems in the country are not about to disappear from sight, we should at least make an effort to protect pedestrians from being easily slaughtered on the roads.

Police attribute the Sunday accident to the simple fact that the culprit driver did not yield to the boy's pedestrian rights. But this is the easy way of getting out of what otherwise is a major and common problem as far as every pedestrian is concerned. The root cause lies in the fact that pedestrians in Jordan have no rights and their protection does not appear to figure highly on the authorities' list of priorities. Schoolchildren, the most vulnerable of all pedestrians, continue crossing streets with maximum risk to their lives or limbs, simply because there are no sufficient crossing points left for them to use in safety. Most countries have what is called zebra lines for pedestrians to use and they apply stiff penalties on drivers who do not respect their sanctity. These states will have also provided several safe crossing points for children, particularly near and around their schools.

Why we have not adopted such a sensible policy is a puzzle to us, especially when we keep hearing pious concerns from the authorities about traffic safety on daily basis. School buses still go on dropping off and picking up children in the middle of streets with great risk to their lives, even when there is plenty of space to park vehicles temporarily on the right of the street.

We think our traffic department should make a greater effort and give priority to learning from the experiences and practices of others on how to make the life of pedestrians more manageable and safe. As long as we cling to the practice of "cross at your own risk," there can be no hope for our people to stop the tide of carnage on the roads.

His Majesty King Hussein has lent this and other traffic problems utmost concern and called personally on the Traffic Department and the whole police force to do something meaningful about it, right away. All what we have seen instead is the frequent stopping of cars (particularly those drivers who are violating no laws), for routine inspections that amount effectively to a harmful waste of energy and time. The police may strongly believe that validity of car and driver licences are very important, but we disagree totally that checking on them should take place on any occasion other than when the law is violated or when there is strong suspicion that it may be. Working on building a new more civilised culture for safe driving, including halting on stop signs for example, should top the priorities of the police force. Since that force's time is also precious, most of it should be devoted to avoiding serious accidents and tackling real problems where they exist. Reducing road accidents require re-educating drivers on driving rules and norms. It also calls for educating traffic policemen on proper administration of traffic laws in accordance with a clear list of priorities. The collection of fines is not an end in itself nor should it be made so. We need to transcend the stage of handing out parking tickets and move towards a more noble task. The mission is to protect lives of citizens, save material possessions and spare everybody the huge toll on senses and nerves.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN-Palestinian talks in Cairo about the return of the Palestinian refugees and displaced persons to their homeland in Palestine were timely and came to counter Israeli officials' announcements recently that 90,000 Jews are expected to emigrate to the Jewish state in 1995, according to a writer in Al Ra'i. Ahmad Misleh said the declared commitment on the part of the three sides to pursue negotiations with Israel later this month over the Palestinians' right of return reflects their determination to abide by the U.N. resolutions in this matter, and shows their resolve to exert pressure on the Israeli government to implement the Oslo and Cairo agreements, which call for Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank and the return of the displaced Arabs. The writer said that Israel has committed itself to these terms by signing the deal with the Palestinians and through its leaders' statements that they will not suspend the peace process despite the suicide bombing attacks and other obstacles designed to derail peace plans. Meeting on the question of the displaced Palestinians came after the summit with the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Cairo, noted the writer, who expressed hope that the planned meeting by the four parties later this month would witness serious discussion over the method and the modalities of the repatriation process, which, he said, is an essential element in the peace process.

THE SO-CALLED security siege imposed by Israel on the West Bank and Gaza Strip will not stop bombing and other attacks on the occupation forces, but would subject the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the Palestinian people to additional pressures, which could trigger more acts of violence, said Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Ra'i. The Israeli oppressive measures are bound to backfire since they would create frustration and despair in the hearts of those who back the peace process, he said. How can the poorly equipped Palestinian force prevent attacks on the Israelis inside areas completely under control by the occupation authorities and achieve what the Israeli army has failed to accomplish? asked the writer. He said it is inconceivable to see the Palestine National Authority providing security for the Israeli society at a time when occupation is still in place and the Israeli government is still determined to pursue atrocities against the Palestinians.

## The View from Academia

# Picnicking in the Jordan Valley

By Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubah

EVEN THOUGH the Jordan Valley has many exceptional and even unique features and qualities (such as its special location, its rich landscape, its beautiful winter and spring climate, its fascinating historic sites, etc.) which make it attractive to visitors of all sorts, it has not yet received the attention it truly deserves. The facilities for internal tourism in particular, especially for weekend outings, are extremely lacking.

On the one hand, we understand perfectly that priority ought to be given (and to some extent it is given) to farming, since the valley is a major source of most of the fruit and vegetables we consume and export. We equally understand that we ought to make ample room and spend an adequate amount of money on the water reservoirs and projects, which are so vital to us at this moment in history and in the future. And we also appreciate highly the various facilities (though few) that have come into being in the past decade or so: i.e. the hot springs at North Shouneh, the resthouse at Pella, the Dead Sea resthouse, the Dead Sea Hotel.

The point to stress here is two-fold. First of all, the Jordan Valley territory is not as large as many think. Therefore, we ought to plan carefully the use of every inch of it, keeping in mind the needs not only of the present generation and the present time but also those of the future generations and the future times. Secondly, Jordan's financial resources are extremely limited, and they also ought to be very carefully planned and spent. We have to allocate money according to the priorities which our strategists and planners set for us; first things come first.

That said, however, I believe that in thinking about our plans and in allocating our funds, we have to take into account the needs of nearly all Jordanians and all citizens

from abroad residing for significant periods of time in the Kingdom who seek the Valley for fun and recreation. We do care very much about the quality of the water we drink and use and about its availability all year round (much of which comes from the Valley reservoirs), and we do care about the fruit and vegetables which come to us from the Valley, especially at times when they cannot be found anywhere else in the Kingdom. But we also care about our psychological health, sanity and happiness. The aesthetic dimension of the Jordan Valley landscape is vital to all of us. There is nothing like leaving Amman or Irbid on a chilly day in winter or spring to enjoy the warmth of the valley; there is nothing equal to the pleasure of a drive late March or April from Um Qais to Alhamme then to North Shouneh; there is nothing equal to the ecstasy one feels when one takes a swim in the Dead Sea one late summer afternoon or evening. And a volleyball game, a game of backgammon, a barbecue, a cup of Turkish coffee, etc.

Outings to the Valley have become essential for a majority of our population. On most weekends in winter and spring, the Valley (from Alhamme in the north to the Dead Sea and Ghor Alsaifi and Ghor Almazra'ah in the South) is packed with people.

Unfortunately, the needs of most picnickers are not catered for. The needs are numerous, ranging from the essential to the less essential. I wish, however, to raise a couple of them. To illustrate these two needs, let's divide the Valley into two areas: the first is the two Shounehs, the second is the Dead Sea. This is generally what people mean when they speak of the Valley.

As for the Shounehs, the problem that bothers most picnickers most is, believe it or not, lack of space. Most areas located between Alhamme and South Shouneh are

owned, fenced or off limits. Many people going to the valley seek what they call "Alkhadar" (greenness). They do not wish or enjoy going to the Dead Sea area which, in their opinion, is either desert or too exposed to the sun to bear. When they try to find a place in the area just specified, they have a tough time. Either they have to trespass or to sit right at the edge of the road. The few attractive places are usually taken. A friend of mine tells me that even though he likes the Ghor very much, he hates going there because he cannot find a place to sit comfortably. "Unless a friend of yours or a friend of a friend of yours invites you to their farm or orchard, I advise you not to go to the Valley; you won't enjoy it," he says.

I believe that he is right to a great extent. The concerned authorities must allocate some space and some funds to make room for picnickers seeking these areas.

As for those who go to the Dead Sea, they have a better luck. Generally speaking, there is ample room. Of course, those who can afford it can go to the resthouse or the hotel. But the beach is big enough to accommodate large numbers of people. The main problems here, however, are access to the beach and the quality of the space adjacent to it. The problem is simple; many of these unpaved small roads need to be smoothed a little. The same applies to the beach area. Most of it is rough and uncared for. The solution lies in the hands of the authorities, but a couple of bulldozers can perhaps do the job.

More attention ought to be given to the Jordan Valley, the qualities of which one may not find anything like anywhere in the world. It is unique, and it is beautiful. The Almighty has done his share in granting it to us; let's do ours to make it more enjoyable.

By Ali Abunimah

## Words of hatred

"THE BEST way to deal with Islamic fundamentalists is to kill them, to hunt them down, and to assassinate their leaders." These shocking words were uttered in a lecture I attended this week at the University of Chicago, by the noted Israeli professor of international relations, Efraim Inbar of Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv.

Let us be clear that he was not just talking about those few extremists who occasionally commit the outrages that all civilised people must condemn, but the many pious, decent Muslims all over the Middle East, who express their right to freedom of expression and religion, by putting their faith first.

Indeed, in the paper which, Mr. Inbar presented, he urges the use of "mass arrests" and "actively hunting and eliminating Islamic radicals." "Hopefully," he writes, "the West will not interfere because of human rights concerns." Thus, Mr. Inbar indicates his clear awareness that what he espouses goes against all the norms of civilised human behaviour at a time when the entire world is making a commitment to guaranteeing human rights, and to solving conflicts through dialogue and democracy.

Of course, I, like most of the audience, was outraged to hear a respected professor advocating the use of such barbaric tactics. Sadly, though, I was not surprised. Such violent attitudes remain entrenched within Israeli society.

Despite their leaders' declarations of peaceful intentions, it is all too clear that many Israelis consider Arabs to be less than human. Perhaps it is for these reasons that Israel feels that it will be able to secure peace for itself without recognising Palestinian rights to self-determination, and the rights of others. Perhaps such attitudes encourage Israelis to continue to brazenly steal and settle on Arab land before the eyes of the world, and in gross defiance of the spirit of the peace process.

There is a great danger in Israelis' branding all Muslims as potential enemies, for it allows to claim that religious fervour alone drives Arab hostility. Israelis and supporters are travelling around the world, and the United States in particular, to promote the idea that Muslims are the true enemy of Israel and the West. By trying to inflame and provoke ideological and religious confrontation, they seek to hide the reality that the one and only source of conflict in our region was and still is continued Israeli aggression, expansionism and occupation of Arab land.

The greatest danger would be if Muslims fell into this trap. The world knows that the great faith of Islam has always preached and practiced tolerance, and most Jews acknowledge that in the past. When their ancestors were persecuted and massacred in Europe, they found refuge in Muslim and Arab countries. We must continue to proclaim the fact that there can be no just, lasting and comprehensive peace until Israel gives up its dream of being an empire with Palestinians as its lowest subjects.

In this holy month of Ramadan, which coincides with the first anniversary of the crime at the Al Ibrahim Mosque, we must remember that words such as those spoken by Dr. Inbar are not merely idle rhetoric. They constitute an immediate tangible threat to the national security of Palestinians and Jordanians alike. We must ask and expect our government to insist that Israel takes measures to control these extremists, to make sure they carry no influence within Israel's government, and to prevent their ideology from becoming a brutal reality.

Arabs, Muslims, Palestinians and Jordanians must constantly renew their commitment to face the challenge of making peace as one united front because, if heaven forbid, some Israelis seek to implement the hateful recommendations of the growing number of Jewish extremists, they will not distinguish among us.

We are at an historic moment when peace is still possible. We must do all we can to defend it and realise it, but as long as the settlers have support and encouragement in the heart of Israel's government, society and universities, peace will remain a mirage long after the ink on the agreements is dry.

The writer is a Jordanian post-graduate student in Chicago. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

## Clinton enjoys foreign policy honeymoon

By Donald M. Rothberg  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — So far, the Clinton administration is enjoying an unexpectedly smooth foreign policy honeymoon with conservative firebrand Jesse Helms.

When the balance of power in the U.S. Congress shifted last fall in favour of the Republicans, the veteran lawmaker — known for his colourful and unrelenting attacks on liberals including the Democratic president — became chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Many observers feared Mr. Helms would use his new powers to thwart the administration's foreign policy.

But so far those fears are unrealised. An arms control treaty with Russia is progressing smoothly through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee towards ratification. The panel resisted the opportunity to use the hearing on a new ambassador to Israel as a forum for a review of Middle East policy.

How long will the good relations last? "Probably about as long as it takes the committee to take on divisive issues like U.N. peacekeeping, foreign aid and reorganisation of the State Department."

Further along, the panel is ready to ask tough questions about any plans to have U.S. troops bolster an Israeli-Syrian peace agreement by serving as peacekeepers on the occupied Golan Heights.

Over the years, Mr. Helms has made no secret of his dislike of the United Nations. He now has plenty of support among the new Republican majority for cutting back U.S. support for U.N. peacekeeping.

A measure of the administration's concern about the United Nations was the appearance Friday of U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright at the State Department's regular briefing for reporters, where she denounced as "very bad foreign policy" a house bill that would reduce the U.S. contribution to peacekeeping.

A Republican congressional source familiar with Mr. Helms' thinking on the issue suggested the senator would like to go further than the House committee.

Peacekeeping is "a waste of effort," said the source, insisting on anonymity. He said that in most cases, the international community ought to stay out of violent disputes.

"If they want to fight, let them fight," he said. For years the Foreign Relations Committee has sidestepped foreign aid, leaving the issue to the Senate Appropriations Com-

mittee to decide. Under Mr. Helms, that's likely to change. The North Carolina Republican is determined to make a 50 percent cut in aid to countries outside the Middle East.

Israel and Egypt get a total of about \$6 billion a U.S. aid. The rest of the world splits \$7 billion. If Mr. Helms gets his way, the \$7 billion will be cut to about \$3.5 billion.

He'd also like to see the elimination of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and the Agency for International Development, with their functions folded into the State Department. The Clinton administration looked at the idea and now is leaning against it.

James W. Nance, a retired admiral and boyhood friend of Mr. Helms, is the new majority staff director of foreign relations. He predicts that the panel will demand detailed answers about any plan to station U.S. troops on the Golan Heights.

Both the Bush and Clinton administrations told Israel and Syria the United States would consider participating in a Golan Heights peacekeeping force if that would bring about a peace agreement between the two countries.

Srieb a commitment would require congressional approval, and Mr. Nance said he has told the administration that it better be prepared to answer a lot of questions about how it would work.

"If you want us to put troops up on the Golan Heights, how long are they going to be there?" he said. "What's their mission? If a war starts, what are they going to do?"

"Do they shoot at the aggressor? If Israel is the aggressor, do we shoot at the Israelis? Don't you believe it," Mr. Nance said.

The administration also says it will push ahead with a proposed treaty to eliminate chemical weapons. The pact was negotiated by the Bush administration, but many Republicans believe there's no way to verify it.

In at least one area, the administration has received good news from the Senate committee. The START II treaty reducing the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia is moving through without serious opposition.

In fact, Mr. Nance said the committee is likely to defer to the administration on the question of timing.

"I think we'll probably hold it until the State Department says this is an opportune time to pass it," he said.



## Battered Murayama suffers new setback

By Eugene Moosa  
Reuters

TOKYO — It has not been Japanese Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama's week or month.

After enduring unremitting criticism of his handling of last month's earthquake in Kobe, the prime minister has now picked up a new headache with the defeat of his coalition candidate in a local election on Sunday.

The surprise win by the candidate of the opposition New Frontier Party (NFP) raised new questions about the political future of the life-long socialist who in the past week has shown signs of the stress he is under by retracting two statements he made in parliament.

Sunday's setback was in the election for the governor of Aomori, a rural prefecture and stronghold of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the main partner in Mr. Murayama's three-party coalition.

The LDP incumbent, a five-time governor, was defeated by a younger candidate from the NFP, a group

launched just two months ago in a merger of nine opposition parties.

Mr. Murayama's Socialists had also put a candidate, but she won less than a fifth of the votes cast for the winner.

The result was regarded as a long range test of how the government and opposition would fare in two major events this year: unified local polls in April and nationwide polls for half of the 252-member upper house in July.

Asked about Sunday's election result, Mr. Murayama told reporters: "That is separate from parliament. The most important thing for national politics is earthquake measures."

The devastating earthquake, which killed 5,235 people, swept away myths that Japanese cities were quake-resistant and exposed huge gaps in the government's disaster response.

Political commentators and parliamentary sources said Mr. Murayama last

week apparently considered stepping down in a few months because of the central government's bungled response to the earthquake, especially in dispatching the military.

"He was in terrible condition and under huge stress," one Murayama aide told the daily Asahi Shimbun. "He would repeatedly tell himself: 'It is my responsibility that there were more than 5,000 killed.'"

Rare for the soft-spoken Murayama, he also became critical of his staff.

"What's wrong with the prime minister's residence?" Mr. Murayama told aides, according to the Asahi. "There's nobody left after I go to bed," referring to the lack of information brought to him in the early hours of the earthquake.

Mr. Murayama retracted two statements last week. He first told parliament Japan was historically responsible for the split of Korea into rival states and then took it back, saying Japan had no direct responsibility for that post-war

arrangement.

Mr. Murayama also said he was thinking of issuing special bonds to collect funds for earthquake reconstruction and then retracted the plan after opposition from the Finance Ministry.

Government spokesman Hiroyuki Sonoda said on Monday the Murayama government's reconstruction package would include an initial supplementary budget for clearing out rubble and building temporary homes for the 300,000 people made homeless in the devastating earthquake.

Sonoda did not say how big the first extra budget would be but added Mr. Murayama was considering another extra budget around April.

The first extra budget would be submitted to parliament by Feb. 24, Mr. Sonoda told a news conference. The package also includes as many as 20 new disaster laws to speed up reconstruction and provide aid to needy households, firms and local governments.

## Theatre festival has faced unjust, harmful campaign

By Mohammad Mashariqa

The Jordanian Theatre Festival that ended two weeks ago continues to stir controversy in art circles in the Kingdom.

A ceremony last week to distribute the Festival's different awards turned into a heated exchange between the new Culture Minister, Khalid Karaki and members of the Festival's judging committee.

The five-member committee, in a statement read during the awards ceremony accused the directors of the five plays of violating public morals and offending the feelings of the audience. The committee said that the plays included certain scenes and gestures with sexual connotations.

The committee also criticised the scripts of the plays especially those based on foreign tales like *The Plague* and *The Goat Island*, as well as the local play *The Coloured Rain* which was produced by Vesna Mashariqa.

Furthermore, the committee levelled criticism at the technical aspect of the plays, claiming that the plays were a setback to contemporary Jordanian theatre. The committee has decided to withhold most of the prizes on the strength of its evaluation.

Dr. Karaki delivered a speech in which he bitterly criticised the committee's stand.



A scene from *The Coloured Rain*

### AMMAN CULTURAL PULSE

The minister said that the committee's stand ran contrary to the concept of political pluralism now prevailing in Jordan and he criticised the withholding of the prizes which, he said, ought to be presented to the artists for their great endeavours.

Theatre director and critic Bashir Hawari described the committee's decision as a retreat from firmly established cultural traditions in Jordan.

"Over the past two decades, more daring political and social plays were performed in Jordanian theatres and were not criticised or banned even under emergency rules and difficult circumstances which prevailed in the country at that time," Hawari said.

Saying that it is dangerous to impose on artists certain clichés which tend to adversely affect cultural and artistic life, Hawari said the committee has taken an unprecedented stand which requires deep examination by the artists' community who are keen on promoting art work of all kinds and who seek to

enhance the concept of pluralism, tolerance and creativity.

He said that it was ironic to see the committee criticising scripts of world renowned works of art and writings which are considered among the most famous literary works worldwide especially after the committee had given its approval of the plays before their performances. Indeed, it is a source of pride to see such famous literary works on the domestic stage, because performing such famous works reflects a mature theatre and a cultured society.

Fathi Abdul Rahman, the director of the play

*Kardabik Option*, said: "We have faced poor organisation followed by unprecedented chaos. The date of the festival was changed five times for unconvincing reasons. Last December, when the festival was to have been held, the committee decided instead to go to Cairo to attend the Arab Theatre Festival Week, and it was only weeks before the festival last month that the committee asked that a change be made in the roles of certain characters and that actors and actresses who are not members of the Artists Association be banned from acting, though non-Jordanian female characters were allowed to perform

because of the shortage in the number of Jordanian actresses. The postponements and random decisions caused frustration and lack of interest within the artists' community."

The crisis prompted the five theatre groups to withdraw from the committee's appraisal meeting and to publish a detailed statement shedding light on the difficult circumstances they had experienced during the festival and as a reply to the committee's criticisms.

Suheil Elias, a director, said there was urgent need for drastic changes in the festival's rules as a first step towards comprehensive reform.

"It is illogical to have a law stipulating that the festival committee should be chaired by a director general at the Ministry of Culture regardless of his artistic qualifications," Elias said.

"There is also need to reduce the number of sub-committees and to change the higher committee's setup in a manner to ensure the appointment of a qualified artist to organise the annual festivals," he added.

Khaled Tarifi, a theatre director, has expressed his despair over the prospect of reform and over the improvement in relations between the Ministry of Culture and the Jordanian Artists Association.

Tarifi believes that the solution to the problem lies in the different theatre groups performing their work independently from the official government departments which, he said, "tend to lay obstacles in the way through bureaucratic procedures instead of helping to boost the theatre movement in the Kingdom."

The committee included Qamar Safadi, an actress; Nabil Najim, a director with the Ministry of Culture; Taysser Attieh and Mohammad Qabani, actors; and Omar Qafaf, a representative of the Ministry of Education and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Due to the absence, on leave, of its writer Jennifer Hamarneh, the weekly column *Society On The Move* does not appear in today's newspaper.

## Rio's funk music — warning of a distant rumble

By Adam Brown  
The Associated Press

**RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil** — The rival gangs square off, 800 teenagers shadow-boxing and screaming threats under the dizzying whirl of a nightclub's neon lights and pounding metallic music.

Between them is a line of eight bouncers, equipped with clubs, rubber whips and an all-in-a-night's-work disdain for the ritual mayhem about to erupt.

Suddenly, one teenager kicks at a rival's face. A bouncer clubs him in the stomach and the youth falls to the floor, gasping for breath through rotting teeth.

As yellow and pink lights swirl overhead, 30 youths break through the line and attack the enemy gang with flying kicks and punches. The bouncers soon break it up, and the combatants melt back into the swaying mass of dancers.

Minutes later, another skirmish breaks out. Then another, and another, throughout the night until the club closes in the wee hours of the morning.

This is Rio's funk music scene, an explosive mix of entertainment and violence sweeping the poor outskirts of this metropo-

lis of 10 million people.

"This is just fun," said one teenage "funkeiro" outside the Pavunense Dance Club in Rio's Pavuna slum district. He shrugged at the gang battle behind him.

"That's normal," he said. "When somebody gets really violent, security kicks him out." After catching his breath, he cocked his fists and danced back into the fray.

Sometimes the rumble gets out of hand and spills into the streets.

In the middle-class neighbourhood of Tijuca, a gang of 40 funkeiros recently barricaded a street to stop a bus carrying two rivals. They beat the pair senseless and then shot them dead.

Not far away, some 100 funkeiros cornered 10 members of a rival gang in Rio's Staid Botafogo district. Nine were beaten and stabbed with forks but managed to limp away. One couldn't get up and was stoned to death.

At least 12 gang members were killed in 1994 and thousands were hurt in fights between funkeiros.

An offshoot of U.S. soul music from the 1970s, funk over the years has added synthesizers and taken root in Rio's 660 slums, home to some 2

million people.

Its fans are mostly young, urban and poor. Many work at menial jobs, running errands or shining shoes, often for less than \$100 a month. Some steal or sell drugs. They live on the fringes of society, flirting with lawlessness and finding a release in stylised violence.

"Poverty is the root of it," said disc jockey Marlboro, a star in the world of funk. "These people's lives are so bad they see no opportunities. The only way they earn praise from their peers is through violence."

On Friday, they assemble in gangs and walk to one of the 150 dances held around greater Rio. Most dances are relatively peaceful. Local drug lords discourage excessive violence that could attract police and media attention.

The largest dances are held in a "no man's land" not claimed by any gang where rival gangs can clash. For about \$3 a head, as many as 5,000 people attend these "nerve dances," as they're known in funk slang.

Manoel Ribeiro, a sociologist working with poor youngsters, says suppressing the dances won't work because funkeiros

have no respect for police. The violence is a ritual and the ritual has rules — and therein lies the key to stopping it, he says.

In the dances, as few as six security guards separate thousands of funkeiros and manage to stop it from turning into mass bloodshed," Mr. Ribeiro said. "That means the funkeiros have at least some respect for the rules. That's the glimmer of hope for turning this thing around."

In 1993, Ribeiro promoted a dance to make peace between the rival slums of Gigario Geral and Parada De Lucas. He called it a "Dance Of Honour" and recruited six teenage girls as security to control hundreds of warring funkeiros.

"I associated honour and manliness with peace and it went off with very few problems," he said.

The growing popularity of funk among Rio's middle class is helping to knock down barriers of race and class, Mr. Ribeiro said.

"Now you can see blonde girls from the south side dating poor black guys from the slums in the north," he said. "It's a great opportunity to try and solve some of the city's worst problems."

## Art thieves hit Britain's stately homes

By Patricia Reaney  
Reuters

**LONDON** — Britain's stately homes with their secluded rural settings and impressive art collections are attracting some unwelcome visitors — art thieves.

In less than three months the country estates of the Marquess of Bath and the Earl of Pembroke have been burgled by criminals netting valuable works worth millions. Some experts believe this is theft "à la carte" for a discerning clientele.

"They are a soft in terms of security and in terms of access to the public," said detective Sergeant Tony Russell of Scotland Yard's Fine Art and Antiques Squad.

The Marquess of Bath's lost a £5 million (\$7.8 million) Titian masterpiece, *Rest On The Flight To Egypt*, and two other paintings totalling £20,000 (\$31,350) in January when his 16th century Longleat House was raided.

Last November, thieves took a £300,000 (\$470,300) Rembrandt portrait from Pembroke's Wilton House. Seven paintings were also snatched from the home of British author Auberon Waugh shortly after the raid on Longleat, 40 miles

(65-km) away.

Police said stately homes were particularly vulnerable targets. With a similar modus operandi in each raid — burglars used ladders and entered from a first-floor window — police are investigating a possible link.

One theory is that the paintings may have been stolen to order, or to demand a ransom from an insurance company.

"There are similarities," said Detective Inspector Paul Ford who is investigating the crimes. "We are not discounting it."

"The thefts were very well organised and planned. One would have thought that they would have known who they would pass it on to," said a spokeswoman for Nordstern Art Insurance which has offered up to £100,000 (\$157,600) for information leading to the return of the Titian.

"It is quite possible that the thieves themselves have been ordered to go and get the pictures for some reason or another and they obviously get a fee for doing that, albeit a small fee compared to the value of the painting," said Carolyn Wakeford of the Art Loss Register, a global database of stolen art works.

Commissioned thefts do occur. These sort of works are not the sort of thing you could sell on the open market," she added.

Police preferred not to speculate on the theory but noted that with anything of value which is on public display, like the Titian and Rembrandt, there is an element of risk.

"Anywhere that has that type of property may be a target," said Mr. Ford.

As operations manager of the Art Loss Register, which since its inception in 1991 has helped to recover £70 million (\$109.7 million) of stolen property, Ms. Wakeford is well versed on missing art.

The register, which has 70,000 items and images in its files, was set up as a service for the insurance industry and art world. Sotheby's and Christie's auction houses are among its shareholders but police also receive the register which lists items ranging from a few hundred dollars to millions.

"We include anything there is a market for in the art trade, anything that is likely to turn up at some stage on the market," Ms. Wakeford said.

The most expensive work in their files is *The Concert*, a rare painting by the Dutch artist Ver-

meer which was stolen from an American museum several years ago.

"It's been described as priceless. There are only 38 in existence and only two left in private collections, one of which belongs to the Queen of England."

Because of the high profile and value of the recent stolen paintings and the fact that the thefts were reported so quickly, experts are hopeful they will be found.

"There is a very high chance of them being recovered," said Mr. Russell. "Maybe not in the foreseeable future but certainly because of the difficulty there is in selling them we normally find in maybe three, maybe 10 years' time they will surface again."

Bryan Dovey, security adviser for Britain's Museum and Galleries Commission, agreed.

"Eventually if their potential is to be realised they have got to come back to the public field, that's the difficult bit for the thieves. So often these world renowned paintings do come back just as *The Scream* (by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch) came back last year," he said.

## Search for alien life moves to the southern skies

By Geoff Spencer  
The Associated Press

**SYDNEY, Australia** — The huge Radio Astronomy Observatory sits in the outback 220 miles (350 kms) west of Sydney — and perhaps less than five light years away from extraterrestrial civilisation.

For five months starting today, scientists funded by top computer industry whizzes will use the Parkes telescope to scan billions of radio waves across the galaxy in search of extraterrestrial life on 200 stars.

The scan is part of a larger project, dubbed Project Phoenix, in which

observatories around the world are focusing on 1,000 stars for at least the rest of the decade.

It will be the biggest and most systematic sweep of its kind across the southern skies. It continues the quest for proof of alien life that was begun by NASA, which had its funding cut by the deficit-conscious Congress in 1993.

Some U.S. lawmakers have dismissed the search for other beings in the universe as pointless. But SETI, the private California-based institute that has picked up where NASA left off, regards it as vital.

"It is the most important question the human

species has asked itself... Are we alone or are we not? Either way it's mighty important," said scientist Jill Tarter, one of a group of former NASA astrophysicists now with SETI, which stands for Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence.

The search is backed by Hewlett-Packard Co. co-founders David Packard and William Hewlett, Intel Corp. co-founder Gordon Moore, Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft Corp., and science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke.

Most of the stars that will be watched are similar in age and size to our sun and so could have Earth-like planets capable of sus-

taining life, said project spokesman Seth Shostak.

The closest is about 4.5 light years from Earth. The most distant 150 light years away. A light year — the distance light travels in a vacuum in one year — equals 5.88 trillion miles (9.40 trillion kilometres).

The project's aim is to identify artificial signals amid the deluge of natural radio waves constantly pulsing through the cosmos. Such a find could be a sign of extraterrestrial civilisation, the scientists say.

"It's like Columbus getting his sailing ships together and heading out

tor America," said Kel Wellington, of Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, which operates the Parkes Observatory.

Attempts to listen in on alien signals have gone on for decades. This exercise will be much more than twiddling a radio dial.

Intricate computerised equipment, developed by NASA for its now defunct research effort, has been attached to the 63-metre (210-foot) Parkes dish.

It will monitor and analyse 28 million radio channels simultaneously in a spectrum which covers radio, television and microwave signals.

"If an (alien) signal is found, it won't be heard by a human ear. We'll see it first on a computer screen," said Ms. Shostak.

Such messages might have taken generations to cross vast distances of space — and it's unlikely any earthing would understand it.

Earth itself has been sending artificial signals since radio was invented a century ago — perhaps not enough time for distant extraterrestrials to know of our existence, Ms. Shostak said.

Plenty of possible alien signals have been reported by radio astronomers in the past but none been verified. Elaborate cross-

checking will be done by a smaller radio telescope at Cocorabran, 185 miles (300-kms) northeast of Parkes.

The scientists are convinced extraterrestrial intelligence, probably far more advanced than our own, is somewhere out there. And they promise they will announce any confirmed discovery quickly.

Until then, they regard it as a matter of when, not if.

"We could have success at any step, but we are prepared for the long journey. It might take a decade. It might take a century," said project physicist John Dreber.

## Typing the century away

By Jean-Claude Elias

If one had to give up all PC applications and keep just one of them, it would certainly be word processing (WP). It is indeed the software that has contributed the most to give personal computing the popularity it now enjoys. Data bases are great, electronic spreadsheets amazing but WP remains the king in a distinguished court of programmes.

Back in 1981 I had the privilege to supply a WP machine to one of the top industries in the country. It was, I am certain of that, the very first such unit that was ever brought to Jordan. It was also one of the very first dedicated WP systems in the world. It is worth mentioning that it was already bilingual, that is fully Arabic-English.

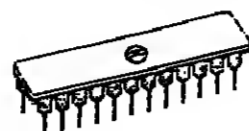
The purchasing decision was personally taken by the managing director of the plant. Looking back at what happened fourteen years ago I can realise now that he was truly a man of vision. The machine's cost was in the range of JD 10,000 and its possibilities were but a ridiculous fraction of a JD 1,500 modern, PC-based WP system, but they did an excellent job with it for 6 or 7 years and I guess that in the end it died of "exhaustion" rather than obsolescence. The machine was of course replaced with new PCs.

The original concept of WP was to have "electronic typing with a memory". Recent versions of the celebrated WordPerfect or Microsoft Word however have stretched this notion beyond conceivable limits. The name of the game is not just "type, save and print" any more.

MS-Word version 6.0 for instance allows you to handle any printing job from a simple memo letter to a fully published book, including graphs, drawings, automatic footnotes, annotations and sophisticated page layout. Complex paragraphs formatting, blending different character fonts, styles and sizes is not only possible but relatively easy to do. Sorting, calculating and filing are also possible operations. Checking your spelling, creating automatic mailing lists and viewing your work through different angles is as easy as 1-2-3.

Generating mailing addresses for envelopes, merging different texts and instant, "while-you-type"

## chip talk



correction of obvious mistakes is a breeze. Type "teh" and see it immediately changed to "the", or type "recieve" and it will automatically become "receive", and so on. Nothing is left out and most automatic operations can be switched off if the user wishes to, for maximum flexibility.

With WP the quality of communication has dramatically improved. Even inside one single organisation badly written documents are no longer acceptable. Poor presentation and delays can't be excused anymore, WP allows each and every one who can use a PC to produce precise, efficient and attractive documents. The work can also be done much faster than before. Neat, polished texts can be processed at an amazing speed and an average laser printer will print them out at the rate of six pages per minute.

Some complain that programmes like Word 6.0 have too many features saying that few people will use all of them. Because of these numerous features the software has become too heavy, occupies too much memory in the machine and slows things down. On the contrary, I guess every single function finds a user sometime and it's nice knowing all these features are available whenever we may need them.

The way we think of typing, a less than accurate term for working with a WP, has dramatically changed over the past decade. I will just quote the son of a friend of mine. The PC-educated young boy had never seen a typewriter's keyboard in his life. Upon looking at a traditional typewriter his father brought down from the attic, probably to dispose of, the boy exclaimed: "Oh look, an old lady computer!"

## Hands across the water to escape dumb and dumber?

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaceen

If you ever do find yourself in a position where you can fulfill a dream, just do it and don't even think twice about it. But like everything else, all good dreams come to an end. And that is where the nightmares begin.

Let me give you a personal example: I have wanted to go to Paris ever since I did a report on the modern architecture of Paris as a first year architecture student in London. But you do not want to know about that. Anyway, if you ever decide to go, you will come to discover the difference between "to want to go" and "to go."

First of all you have to organise a visa. This would seem difficult at the time but would actually turn out to be one of the least agonising things that you have to do. This is because, as you will come to discover, it is more time consuming to get a reasonably priced ticket and get a travel permit if you are one of numerous male-persons who need one.

When you get to the airport you will discover that your English-speaking friend will pay a departure tax nearly half as much as your own even though you are going to the same place. He tries to explain to you that when you leave the United Kingdom your departure tax varies according to where you are going and not who you are.

Incidentally, this is the same friend who later wonders why you as a Jordanian citizen have to fill in a departure card when you leave Jordan while he does not do such a thing when he leaves the U.K. You try to explain that this is the way the system works in Jordan but you have some difficulty getting through to your friend.

Anyway, you might decide that you want to go to Paris via London, through, as you have already boasted to your friends, the recently inaugurated Channel Tunnel. This seems like another great idea until you realise that taking the train is twice as expensive as taking the plane.

Meanwhile, why not spend some time with your old

college friends who are still studying in London while you hunt for a fairly cheap London-Paris return ticket. Certainly, the lingering fascination with Paris makes it worth the while. And while in London, why not take a stroll down Oxford Street towards Hyde Park. What you are really after is that part of the park called Speaker's Corner. This, to the many that do not know, is a part of the park where anyone can put up a platform and talk about anything. Well, just about anything.

What you are really after are the loud Arab "speakers." Maybe "preachers" is a more appropriate word in their case. Well, seek and you shall find. And find you do.

Your speaker is clad in a typical military gear (or at least, typical as far as the stereotype goes) and carries the flag of a nation who only recently fell from grace in Western eyes. Ah, but enough of that because you are really interested in what he has to say and not in the contents of this man's wardrobe — no pun intended. You have also come to notice that over the years all the speakers have always been male. We can thus conclude that most males appear to have no problems in obtaining a travel permit.

Oddly enough, our speaker, in spite of his unpopularity, seems to have attracted quite a large audience of smiling tourists. But you are the only one who doesn't get the joke. You are standing there thinking that maybe you have stumbled upon the reasons that make most Westerners weary of most Arabs, their apparent, in Western eyes at least, lack of reason and the ability to argue and discuss constructively. The old ways of slogans and labels do not figure in modern Western vocabulary.

You can only come to learn this through interacting with those Europeans and others. And through this interaction, which brings on its own field of dreams and knowledge, you learn more about yourself and about others. And through further travels, through staying in touch with your old English, German, Spanish and French friends and making new ones all the time, you too can grow and keep growing, as a person and an individual.

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shmeqair

### CURIOUS SUPERSTITIONS

**LAME:** If the first man you meet on your way, after leaving home, is lame, you'll never expect good on that day.

A dead man is doomed to go to hell if his funeral happens to be passed by a lame donkey.

★★★★★

**BLIND:** He who uproots a mandrake (a plant associated with the aubergine family) will probably become blind.

If a pregnant woman closes a blind man's eyes and never makes a sign of a cross over her belly, it is feared that she will give birth to a blind baby.

And he who smiles to a blind man whom he meets on his way, it augurs a good omen for him on that same day.

★★★★★

**CROW:** It is advisable for a man to come back home and never leave it on that day if he sees by chance a crow in the morning passing on his left hand.

If a flock of crows hover three times over one of the fields, this foretells that its owner will die.

### LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

— Where's the nearest pharmacy, please?

Ayna aqrah saydaliya, min fadlik?  
— It's just opposite the Housing Bank in downtown. Insha mazaal bank-al-iskan tamaman fee wasatil-madina.

— Is it still open at night?

Hal satabqa maftooha fil-layl?  
— Yes, till ten. Na'am, wahatta as'saa al-ashrah.  
— I'd like a packet of cotton and a tube of skin ointment, some gauze and bandages as well as a roll of plaster.

Oreed ruzmatan min al-kota wa onboobatan min mirham al-jild, baadhi ash'shashwad 'dimadat wa laftatan minad'dimad al-lasliq.

— OK. Do you want anything else?

Wahwa kazalik. Hal toraad ayya shy aakhar?

— I want some nose drops.

Oreed baadlan min noqat al-anf.

— Have you got a bad cold and sore throat?

Hal asta musab bebad shadid wa haq matkab?

— Yes, and my temperature is so high.

Na'am, wa darajat hararati alia.

— I recommend you to see a doctor at once.

Ansahoka ann tara tabiban fil-hal.

— Would you mind writing me his name and address?

Hal ladayka mani' min kitabet kumlihi wa onwanah?

— Of course, sir, I'm at your service.

Tab'an, sayyedi. Fa'ana fee khidmatik.

### TIME FOR FUN

★ A married couple went to a supermarket and took their baby with them in a pram. Leaving it with other babies, they got into the store. Having finished shopping, the man started pushing the pram ahead. No sooner had they left the place than the wife discovered that the pram wasn't theirs. Telling her husband what the matter was, he said: "Lower your voice, please. Don't you see that this pram is much better and newer than ours?"

★★★★★

★ "Would you allow me to have one-day leave tomorrow, sir?" said the worker to his boss.

"What for?"

"To buy a lot of things my wife needs."

"No, no," the boss answered.

"Thank you, sir. You've already saved me from a critical situation."

★★★★★

★ After their quarrel, the husband wrote the following note and placed it on the table: "Wake me up at 6."

But the poor husband woke up at 10.

Boiling with anger, the man suddenly noticed another piece of paper close to his. It read: "Wake up. It's 6 now!"

### BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Is there a city noted for its Silver Street?
2. What is the English name for Firenze?
3. Locate the Dismal Swamp.
4. In what countries can you sail in a) a dahi-bijeh b) a gondola?
5. Where do people ride in a jaunting car?
6. What is a tickler file?
7. Give another name for AMANUENSIS.

### PARTY GAMES

#### HANGMAN

Just as no collection of party games could be complete without Charades, so no book of paper and pencil games and puzzles is complete without Hangman, one of the best known and most loved games for two players, known to man.

It's simple, it's stylish and here's what happens: Each player in turn thinks of a six-, seven-, eight-, or nine-letter word and marks each letter with a dash, except in two places where he puts a couple of letters as clues. (If PUZZLE was the word, for example, it could be marked like this P—E or like this —U—L— or even like this —ZZ—). The opponent then has to try to guess the missing letters one at a time, indicating where he thinks each letter should go. Every time he guesses wrongly, the moment of his execution draws nearer. He has eleven guesses, and each time he wastes a guess by suggesting a wrong letter for a wrong place, the gallows grows before his very eyes. The first wrong answer means the drawing of the base of the gallows, the second means the upright, the third the arm, the fourth the support, the fifth the rope, the sixth the head, the seventh the body and the last four the arms and legs.



### PUZZLES

#### WORD HUNT

There are at least 13 words which contain the letter sequence LEM.

How many can you think of?

1. .... 2. .... 3. ....
4. .... 5. .... 6. ....
7. .... 8. .... 9. ....
10. .... 11. .... 12. ....
13. ....

## JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Feb. 9

7:30 N.B.A.

8:30 Road To Avonlea

Sara and Felix enlist the help of the witch to spur on the shy and awkward Jasper Dale in his courtship to Aunt Olivia.

9:10 The Hat Squad

Buddy tracks a suspected gangster who he believes was responsible for his natural father's death years ago, and, in the process, he learns the painful truth about his dad.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — An Innocent Man

Starring: Tom Selleck & F. Murray Abraham

Jimmie Rainwood is a decent guy; an airplane mechanic who likes his job and loves his wife. But a mistake by two overzealous undercover detectives turns his simple life into a nightmare.

12:00 Bangkok Hilton

Friday, Feb. 10

7:30 African Skies

A casual drive almost turns to tragedy when Rainwood is run off the road by a truck loaded with tree trunks.

8:45 P.M. Magazine

Presented by Manal Azar

9:15 Grand Slam

10:00 News In English

10:20 Flight Into Hell

12:00 If Tomorrow Comes

Saturday, Feb. 11

7:30 You Bet Your Life

8:00 Quantum Leap

9:10 Natural Lies

His mind full of shock, grief and guilt, Andrew cannot escape the memory of Beth and as he assists in winding up her affairs, he becomes increasingly suspicious of the way in which she died.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Three Men And A Baby

Starring: Tom Selleck & Steve Guttenburg

The movie charmingly captures the spirit of bachelorhood and makes everyone wish for husbands like freewheeling bachelors, Peter, Michael and Jack who inspire tears of laughter as they learn about diapering, feeding and burping.

12:00 And The Sea Will Tell

Sunday, Feb. 12

7:30 Best Stories

7:50 Charlie Chaplin

8:00 Erebus — The Aftermath

This episode puts into perspective the events which followed the disaster, a royal commission of inquiry, court of appeal and privy council decisions.

9:00 Step By Step

9:30 Heartbeat

A local programme presented by Maha Adasseh

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film — Threshold

Starring: Donald Sutherland & Jeff Goldblum

The professional fate of a dedicated and ethical cardiac surgeon is harshly tested when he decides to implant an artificial heart to one of his patients.

12:00 T.H. We Meet Again

Monday, Feb. 13

7:30 Documentary — Ramadan In The World

7:45 Magazine Zero One

8:00 Street Hawk

8:45 Documentary — The Miraculous Cosmos Of The Brain

9:10 By Way Of The Stars

10:00 News In English

10:20 Fall From Grace

12:00 Feature Film — Ordinary People

Starring: Mary Tyler Moore & Donald Sutherland

A family of three are torn by feelings of guilt, each carrying his tragedy with him.

Tuesday, Feb. 14

7:30 Documentary — Best Stories

7:50 Home Improvement

8:30 Road To Avonlea

9:10 Documentary — Equinox

10:00 News In English

10:20 Documentary — Watergate

The programme lays out evidence that the break-in into the Watergate building was just one of a series of crimes instigated by the president himself.

12:00 Feature Film — The Room Upstairs

Starring: Sam Westerson & Joan Allen

The film tells the story of a woman and her unique experience as a writing teacher for the handicapped.

Wednesday, Feb. 15

7:30 Documentary — Ramadan In The World

7:45 Documentary — Get To Know Your Body

8:30 Law And Order

9:10 The Dwelling Place

10:00 News In English

10:20 Snowy River

12:00 Feature Film

## Ben Kingsley basks in international film community glow

By Matt Wolf  
The Associated Press

LONDON — Ben Kingsley trained in the British theatre, distinguishing himself in the classic plays of Shakespeare, Chekhov and Ben Jonson.

But the actor regards that as a bygone era. More than a decade since his

Academy Award-winning performance as the Mahatma in *Gandhi*, the Anglo-Asian Kingsley happily identifies himself as "part of the international film community."

"It's a community I adore and am deeply at home in. It's not parochial, not snobbish, not ridiculed or wracked by the

class system — either subscribing to it or reacting violently against it," said Kingsley, settling in for a light lunch at Browns Hotel in central London.

"The Royal Shakespeare Company ask me back practically every year to play something wonderful," he continued, but, "I always think there's time to do theatre because these plays are done again and again."

However, "you get only one chance to do *Death And The Maiden* with Roman Polanski. I think, 'that's me in *Schindler's List*.' I'm in that movie forever."

Kingsley's performance in *Death And The Maiden*, which opened Christmas Day in New York and Los Angeles, bears out an indelible screen presence that begins — but does not end — with his fierce brown eyes.

Based on the play by Ariel Dorfman, Polanski's screen adaptation casts Kingsley as Dr. Roberto Miranda living in an unnamed Latin American country — Dorfman's na-

tive Chile, most likely — newly restored to democracy after a dark period of fascism.

One rainswept night, Miranda offers a lift to Gerardo Escobar (Stuart Wilson), the recently appointed investigator of a government committee on human rights violations under the previous regime.

He ends up bound and gagged by Escobar's wife, Paulina (Sigourney Weaver), who is certain Miranda was the man who tortured her 15 years earlier to the accompaniment of Schubert's *Death And The Maiden*.

In London, the play won a 1992 Laurence Olivier Award for best play, beating such competitors as Alan Bennett's *The Madness Of George III*, also the basis of a critically acclaimed film.

A subsequent Broadway production was less well-reviewed but nonetheless won a Best Actress Tony Award for Glenn Close, who gave a poignantly clear, direct performance as the tormented Paulina.

Polanski's film version

is notable for its two male actors. While Weaver falls back on some bad night school theatrics in an effort to hold her own, both Wilson and Kingsley create a tense cat-and-mouse game that sustains interest through to the confessional ending.

Kingsley dominates the finish with an extraordinary monologue — related directly to camera — in which the camer never cuts away from his face. The scene makes wonderful use of the actor's chameleonic qualities — an aggressive presence in some films (*Betrayal*), kind of decent in others (*Schindler's List*).

Dorfman, the film's co-author (with Rafael Yglesias), told the Associated Press that, "Ben saves the film by keeping the character ambiguous, and for me that was totally, totally essential."

"He makes the point that Miranda is inside all of us," Dorfman said. "He is one of the terrors the play is talking about."

Kingsley said he owed much of his portrait of

Miranda to *Schindler's List* colleague Ralph Fiennes, the young English actor who jolted moviegoers last year with his performance as the SS commander, Amon Goeth.

"A lot of the ambiguity that Ralph found I adopted for *Death And The Maiden*," said Kingsley. "Here you think, 'actually, this guy could run a concentration camp. No he couldn't. Yes he could. No he couldn't!'"

It's the latest in a run screen work that — says Kingsley, naming his film directors one by one — few actors could hope to better. In addition to Steven Spielberg, Polanski and Richard Attenborough of *Gandhi*, his directors have included Steven Zaillian (*Searching For Bobby Fischer*), Ivan Reitman (*Dave*) and Barry Levinson (*Bugsy*).

"They have such vision, such energy, that I am completely addicted to cinema," he said. "The writers, the scenarios, the predicaments have all been so compelling that there is no space left to miss Shakespeare or



Ben Kingsley as Gandhi

Chekhov or any of that lot that I spent 15 years of my life interpreting gladly and happily."

He acknowledges that it has taken time to build up such diversity on screen. After *Gandhi*, Kingsley recalled, the attitude seemed to be that "if we

need someone in a big diaper with a white scarf being very nice and very old, then we know who to call."

"It's a product of the Hollywood way of thinking — actors find a niche and then do it over and over again."

## Jodie Foster: Is it possible to be fragile and strong?

NEW YORK (AP) — Jodie Foster wasn't sure she could pull off playing the character in "Nell." Among the reasons she cites: "I'm too controlling, and you always see too much intelligence in what I do." Then there's the matter — which she acknowledges — of her being so different from Nell, a feral young woman living in remote North Carolina woods and speaking a language all her own.

"Ultimately, when you get down to it, the greatest thing about this character is that she is entirely, emotionally available," says Foster, as she fidgets on the sofa in a hotel suite. "It's not a way that comes very naturally to me. I'm pretty socialized. I watch my CNN and drink cappuccino and talk on the phone. And we tend to use language to deflect, to just sort of hop ideas, but certainly to connect. And her language is about connection... And that really means it has to be emotionally direct."

"And my question is: Am I brave enough to live that way? Is it possible to be fragile and to be strong?" Foster says she's been looking for that kind of balance, and it's probably the biggest reason she's an actress. Her career has been marked by portraying tough survivors. She won her two Best Actress Academy Awards playing the gangster survivor in 1988's *The Accused* and FBI agent Clarice Starling who survives learning what goes best with chianti in 1994's *The Silence Of The Lambs*.

Other notable, hard-boiled roles include the on in *Taxi Driver* (1976) and the leader of a group of teenage friends in *Foxes* (1980). "I think



Jodie Foster

that's what dramatic characters do; they have a journey that has to do with countering... and surviving," Foster says. "That is what heroes do."

Born in Los Angeles and named Alicia Christian, Foster was the youngest of four children. Her father, a real estate agent, and her mother — Evelyn Foster — divorced when Mrs. Foster was three months pregnant with Jodie.

Foster's career began accidentally at age 3. Her mother had carted her along to her older brother's audition for a

tanning lotion commercial. The ad execs noticed the little girl in the studio and chose her to be the Coppertone girl.

Articulate and confident throughout a one-on-one interview, Foster offers self-effacing words when it's suggested she's a Hollywood rarity — someone who segued from child star to adult star with her talent and sanity intact.

She quickly mentions others who endured: Ron Howard, Little Opie on the old Andy Griffith Show, or Helen Hayes ("My God She was Great") or Roddy McDow-

all ("he's a kooky, great guy").

And she talks about being lucky. But come on: It was more than luck, right? "Well, good management and backstage," she admits. "My mom really wanted people to take me seriously. She did not want me to be some exploited model."

She didn't want me to be cute. She didn't want me to be a movie star. She wanted me — and perhaps this was her vicarious thrill — to be a respected actress. She wanted me to be like Helen Hayes, or like Meryl Streep."

## Brooke Shields is new bad girl in Grease

NEW YORK (AP) — Its nearly midnight outside the Harley Davidson Cafe, but it might as well be rush hour as a jostling crowd gawks at Brooke Shields and Andre Agassi. See Brooke smile sweetly at Andre. See the tennis pro's grinning gaze on Brooke. See photographers pop so many flashbulbs in their faces you fear New York's celebrity couple of the moment will suffer permanent retina damage.

The occasion is an opening night party for Shields, who has stepped into the role of bad girl Betty Rizzo in the hit Broadway revival of *Grease*. Ninety minutes earlier at the show's curtain call, the tall supermodel-turned-actress accepted a bouquet of long-stemmed roses from Tommy Tune, the much taller director-choreographer. The performance had gone well.

Shields, making her Broadway debut, sang and danced with surprising grace, gumption and good humor. She even looked like she was having fun, something Rosie O'Donnell, who originated the role in the revival, never quite managed to do.

And Shields does a lot more for Rizzo's black leather costume than the full-figured O'Donnell ever did. Inside the motorcycle-themed restaurant, Shields patiently posed for more photos — without Agassi — and good-naturedly fielded questions from several earnest journalists clutching microphones.

"The purpose of everybody being there is to get your picture, so you might as well do it," Shields said during an interview, several days after the late-



Brooke Shields makes her Broadway debut in *Grease*

night celebration. "The tendency to fight that only breeds more anxiety. If I start not wanting to be there, I shouldn't show up at all."

Shields speaks with the experience of a veteran of the photography wars. On public view for nearly all of her 29 years as a model, actress and paparazzi target, she takes a practical view of press hoopla.

And she explains how she keeps her sanity throughout the more frenzied aspects of publicity events. "There's one thing I have my focus on, usually the person I'm relying on for my safety," she

says, referring to a security man who keeps a watchful eye on her during public occasions. "If there's one person you can channel a certain amount of focus to, the rest doesn't become so overwhelming."

"It's a fine line to walk. You never give so much that you feel devoured. I try to make it on my terms whenever I'm out there. I think that comes from years and years and years of being in front of the firing squad." Shields sits in a quiet corner of an overpriced restaurant across the street from the

Eugene O'Neill Theatre, now painted a day-glo pink for the *Grease* engagement.

A few of the diners recognize the actress, despite Shields' attempt to downplay her appearance. It would be difficult not to notice. Despite wearing a bulky, brownish sweater, the woman stands out. Liquid eyes. Perfect nose. Thick, brown hair that doesn't just fall, it cascades.

And a warm smile the camera naturally embraces. It's a shock to see her in the show. Pedal pushers. Black leather jacket. And an angled ducktail wig. Yet Shields wears them with style and a sense of humor. "How can you not have fun with 'Grease?' she asks. "The minute that wig goes on, my own life is left behind." It was the show's producers who came to Shields and asked her to audition.

She took them up on their challenge. "It was very surreal," she recalls. "I auditioned in an empty theatre, but everybody was there. It was one of those pressured situations where everybody is trying to tell you it's not pressured — and you know they're lying." She read and sang — and it worked. She now will be on stage at the Eugene O'Neill through April, the longest amount of time she has ever spent on one project.

Theatre was a logical choice after Shields' problematic movie career went into a stall with the flop of Brenda Starr. The film about the comic strip newspaper reporter quickly found its way to video stores. "Movie executives don't know what kind of roles to offer me," she says with a sign.

## Italy haute couture designers say world sales up

By Samantha Conti  
Reuters

ROME — Italian designers of haute couture fashion — the world's most expensive clothing — are celebrating a profit surge, boosted by a cheap-critica and a new generation of customers around the globe.

The designers, showing their spring and summer 1995 collections in Rome,

said that despite sluggish demand at home, they had been able to make business grow by taking advantage of the weak lira and reaching new markets abroad.

Stefano Dominella, the chairman of one of Rome's oldest fashion houses, Gattinoni, said sales in 1994 of haute couture clothing rose by 20 per cent compared with 1993.

"We are getting clients from Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, the United States and Argentina who are taking advantage of the weak lira," Mr. Dominella said. "They realise they can afford the luxury of haute couture at the price of ready-to-wear."

Designer Renato Balestra, who was showing his collection on Wednesday, said he regularly shows his

haute couture to the rest of Europe, Asia, the United States and Africa.

"People are always getting rich somewhere in the world. I'm thinking, in particular, about the Far East, China and Russia," Mr. Balestra said.

Haute couture clothing is marked by superior craftsmanship and is usually made by hand, by a team of artisans — each with his or her own spe-

cialty — especially for the client.

Haute couture customers, who number about 3,000 around the world, are prepared to spend tens of thousands of dollars depending on the fabric and the workmanship required.

Industry experts say the mark of true haute couture clothing is that it is as beautifully crafted on the inside as it is on the out-

side. Mr. Dominella said some of Gattinoni's haute couture designs now sell for about \$8,000 — the cost of expensive but mass produced ready-to-wear clothing.

While no official statistics exist on the Italian haute couture industry, the rise in 1994 exports appears to be in step with an overall rise in exports in Italian women's clo-

thing. In the first quarter of 1994 women's clothing exports amounted to 2.4 trillion lire (\$1.5 billion).

That was 24.3 per cent higher than the same period in 1993, according to an industry association, Moda Industria.

The only people who say they are not happy with a drop in prices are the artisans. Because of the time and the energy

they spend embroidering a wedding veil or stitching thousands of tiny beads onto a silk gown, many feel the clothing they make is vastly undersold.

"No matter how much the customer pays, these dresses are always a bargain," said one seamstress who works in Gattinoni's studio. "No figure could possibly equal the work and the time that goes into making them."

## Musical mind is nature's gift, but use it or lose it

By Paul Reccer  
The Associated Press  
WASHINGTON — Some people are born with a magical sense of music, but without early training the gift may be lost, according to a scientist who studies the shape and size of the brain in the musically talented.

Pictures of the brains of 30 classically trained musicians show that those who have perfect pitch — the ability to identify isolated musical notes they hear — have a greatly enlarged structure on the left side

of the brain. The researcher, Dr. Gottfried Schlaug of Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, said Thursday that musicians in the study who lacked perfect pitch had a brain much like that of people who can't play a note.

But even the gifted had to start early to use what nature gave them.

"There is evidence that those with perfect pitch were exposed to music before the age of 7," said Schlaug. "If you get exposed to music after the

age of 10, the likelihood of developing perfect pitch is extremely low."

Perfect pitch may originate from the left-sided enlargement of a brain structure called the planum temporale. Both the left and right hemispheres of the brain have this structure, said Schlaug, but only the left side planum temporale was enlarged in the musicians who had perfect pitch.

Brain experts said the finding is important because it is the first to

specifically and systematically relate a structure of the brain to an artistic talent.

"The value of this work is that it demonstrates a novel pattern of brain structure that has not been reported previously," said Robert Zatorre, a neuroscientist at the Montreal Neurological Institute of McGill University in Canada. "It raises more questions than it answers and now we need to try to find the meaning."

In the study, published in the journal Science, Dr.

Schlaug and colleagues at the Heinrich-Heine-Universität in Düsseldorf, Germany, took MRI, or magnetic resonance imaging, pictures of the brains of 30 musicians and 30 non-musicians.

All the subjects were right-handed and Dr. Schlaug said he had expected that the pictures would show a slightly enlarged structure on the left side, a pattern that is common for right-handed people.

Instead, he found that in the 11 musicians with

perfect pitch, the planum temporale was about 40 per cent larger on the left side than on the right. There was a slight left-side enlargement among musicians without perfect pitch, but the asymmetry was only slightly different from the 30 non-musicians.

And, said Dr. Schlaug, all the musicians with perfect pitch started their music training before the age of 7.

"We know from other of our studies that there are people who are extremely left asymmetric

(have enlarged left planum temporale) but who are not musicians and have never been exposed to music," he said. This suggests strongly, said Dr. Schlaug, that it takes both "nature and nurture" to create musical genius.

All the musicians in study were of the same age and all had years of training in the classics. They played either string instruments or piano. Twenty-two were men and eight were women, but there were no symmetry differences in the brains

that could be attributed to gender.

Dr. Zatorre said the finding was a surprise because his research on brain function has shown that the sound of music seems to activate the right side of the brain. He said Dr. Schlaug's findings suggest that for the more complex elements of music, both sides of the brain may be involved.

Science, which published the study in the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

## Researchers identify metabolic flaw causing birth defects

By Jim Foley  
USA

WASHINGTON — Researchers have identified a metabolic deficiency that may be responsible for most brain and spinal cord birth defects.

A team of U.S. and Irish investigators report in the British journal *Lancet* that women who give birth to children with neural tube defects, or NTDs, have a flaw in an enzyme called methionine synthase, which plays a key role in the production of a substance that coats nerve cells.

NTDs occur between 20 and 24 days after concep-

tion when tissues fail to close into the tube that gives rise to the brain and spinal cord. The most common defects are spina bifida, which causes paralysis in parts of the body, and anencephaly, a fatal condition in which the brain fails to develop normally.

The birth defects occur in about one per one thousand pregnancies in the United States.

The latest study was funded by the U.S. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the Health Research Board of Ireland.

The scientists reported that while research in recent years has shown that high doses of a vitamin called folic acid given during the first few weeks of pregnancy can prevent NTDs, the latest findings offer a possible explanation as to why. The findings also suggest that adding Vitamin B-12 to either food or supplements can reduce the amount of folic acid needed to prevent NTDs.

The latest findings could have enormous public health implications because the United States, Great Britain and several other countries are considering fortifying food

with folic acid to prevent NTDs. Some health officials suggest that fortifying flour and other grains with folic acid could cut the rate of birth defects in half at virtually no cost.

However, other public health experts fear this would expose large segments of the population not at risk for such birth defects to higher-than-recommended levels of folate.

While folic acid, which is found in fruits, liver, milk and leafy green vegetables, is not harmful even in large doses, the concern is that the vitamin can make it difficult to

detect an uncommon blood disorder called pernicious anemia. The disorder, caused by a deficiency of Vitamin B-12, can lead to irreversible nerve and brain damage.

Researchers discovered the metabolic defect responsible for NTDs through some ingenious biochemical detective work. Knowing that folic acid could prevent NTDs, and that women who gave birth to children with the birth defects had lower levels of Vitamin B-12, they searched for the only chemical reaction in humans that required both folate and B-12.

They discovered that

the enzyme methionine synthase was involved in just such a chemical reaction when it converted the body chemical homocysteine into the amino acid methionine, and theorized that a defect in the enzyme might cause NTDs.

To test the hypothesis, they measured the levels of homocysteine in blood samples collected from women at their first prenatal visits at hospitals in Dublin, Ireland. The study was undertaken in Ireland because children born there have unusually high rates of NTDs.

High homocysteine

levels would suggest that the conversion of homocysteine to methionine had failed to take place at the normal rate, probably because of a defect in methionine synthase. As expected, researchers found that women pregnant with children who had NTDs had higher homocysteine levels than women who had normal pregnancies.

It was also found that blood samples from an NTD group had low B-12 levels had higher homocysteine levels than women who had low B-12 levels but normal pregnancies. "Thus, cases in the low normal range of B-12 had

more difficulty metabolizing homocysteine than control subjects with comparable B-12 levels," said Dr. James Mills, chief of pediatric epidemiology at NICHD.

Red blood cells taken from the NTD group also had low levels of folate, another indication of a defective enzyme since methionine synthase is needed to incorporate folate into cells.

Dr. Mills said, however, that more work needs to be done before it would be practical to develop a screening test to identify women at risk of having children with NTD.

## Tuberculosis — a global crisis

By Brenda C. Coleman  
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Almost 20 years after tuberculosis was declared a global crisis, little has been done to turn the tide against it, researchers warn.

Tuberculosis will strike 10 million people this decade and will kill 30 mil-

lion if worldwide efforts against it don't improve, they predict, drawing from previous World Health Organisation (WHO) figures.

"The magnitude of the global tuberculosis problem is enormous," they said in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Ninety-five per cent of cases are in developing countries. The disease is gaining fastest in the Western Pacific and South East Asia, where two-thirds of infected people live, said the authors, led by Dr. Mario C. Ravignone of the World Health Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland.

New TB cases worldwide can be expected to reach 8.8 million annually this year, increase to 10.2 million by the year 2000 and to 11.9 million by 2005, they said. More than 7.5 million cases occurred in 1990.

Assuming that treatment programmes remain at their 1990 effectiveness

level, 3 million tuberculosis deaths can be expected this year, and 3.5 million deaths can be expected annually by the year 2000, authors said. More than 2.5 million died in 1990.

"Without recognition of the tuberculosis crisis confronting the world and prompt, effective action, the tuberculosis epidemic can be expected to worsen," they said.

Several factors are to blame, they said. Children born decades ago in areas of high population growth are reaching ages where rates of TB sickness and death are great. Also, famine, war and natural disasters are creating large groups of displaced, malnourished people in crowded conditions that

foster the spread of TB. And the AIDS virus is spreading, enlarging an especially vulnerable population.

In 1990, 4.2 per cent of all tuberculosis cases were associated with the AIDS virus. HIV. In the year 2000, an estimated 13.8 per cent of all TB cases may be HIV-associated, the researchers said.

The WHO in April 1993 declared tuberculosis a global health emergency. "It hasn't changed a great deal," said Dr. Dixie E. Snider Jr. of the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, a co-author of the report. "It's important periodically to call people's attention to this."

The researchers based their report on data from

ministries of health in various countries, from WHO questionnaires, from respiratory-disease associations and from published literature.

Tuberculosis is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes bacteria-laden water droplets into the air and someone else inhales them.

Antibiotics can cure the disease, but they must be taken daily for months, and an incomplete course of treatment can produce drug-resistant disease.

The WHO and CDC recommend a five-pronged approach to treating the epidemic: Getting governments to commit themselves to effective programmes, testing more people, su-

persing treatment to ensure that patients take all their medicine, establishing a reliable antibiotic supply and monitoring TB control programmes work to be sure they work.

"It doesn't cost a whole lot to deal with the problem, at least to keep people from dying, but it's beyond the investment some of the poorest countries can make," Dr. Snider said.

"It would be wise for the United States to assist other countries in TB control," he said. "It's not only the humanitarian thing to do, but the economically wise thing to do, because those people will be consumers of American products rather than dead people."

## French sperm declining in quality — researchers

BOSTON (R) — Semen quality at a Paris sperm bank has been gradually declining for the past 20 years, French scientists have found, according to a study.

The medical researchers findings, discussed in an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, found no decline in the amount of semen produced by the 1,351 men donating to the sperm bank.

But the poorer quality of the semen, measured by sperm count and motility, was clear, at least in the group of men studied by a research team led Dr. Jacques Auger of the Groupe Hospitalier Cochin in Paris.

Whether the discovery helps to explain reports of a rise in infertility remains a point of controversy as the reason for the decline in the number of egg-fertilising sperm cells in donated semen is not known.

Theories to explain the change include pollution, differences in diet or lifestyle, or exposure to compounds similar to Oestrogen, the female hormone.

The article did not include figures documenting infertility in the world's population.

In the study, the concentration of sperm dropped by an average of 2.1 per cent per year. The sperm concentration in 1973 was 89 million per millilitre of semen, compared with 60 million in 1992.

The percentage of sperm found to be moving around on their own — a trait crucial in helping a sperm cell find an unfertilised egg — was about 72 per cent in 1973 and a little over 50 per cent in 1992, a decline of 0.6 per cent per year, the study found. About 67 per cent of the sperm appeared normal in 1973, but the percentage had declined to 57 by 1992.

The declines persisted even when the Auger team adjusted for age and duration of sexual abstinence — two factors that can affect the quality and quantity of sperm in the semen.

"We conclude that there has been a true decline in the quality of semen during the past 20 years, since the characteristics of semen from a fertile man of a given age in 1992 were significantly poorer than those of a fertile man of the same age in 1973," the researchers said.

If the trend is applied to

the general population, "the proportion of men with fertility problems will increase," Dr. Auger and his colleagues predicted.

However, there is considerable debate over whether the trend does apply to the broad population.

In an editorial in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, where the study

appears, Dr. Richard Shencus of the Genetics and IVF Institute in Fairfax, Virginia, noted that men donating to a sperm bank are not representative of the general population, and key factors such as differences in age or time of abstinence before giving the sample were not taken into account in the study.

## WEEKEND CROSSWORD

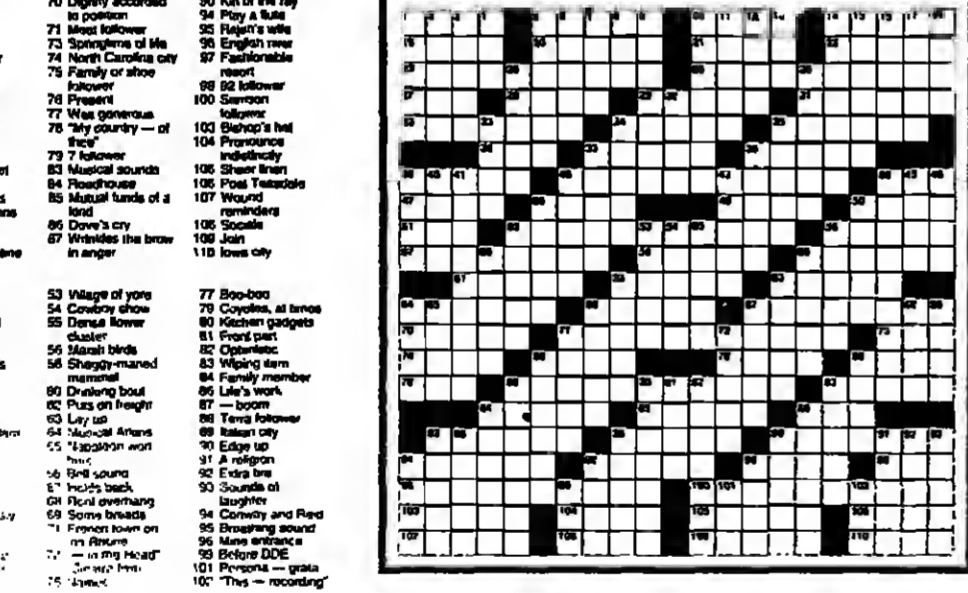
COMPLETION QUIZ  
By Harold B. Counts

ACROSS

1. and loose
2. Physical
3. Having relative
4. Double
5. Escaping
6. acid
7. Window glass
8. Personal follower
9. Four segments
10. 101 follower
11. Degraded follower
12. A color
13. Butta follower
14. Four segments
15. Show up
16. Musical follower
17. Out back
18. Most silent
19. Newspaper feature

DOWN

1. Dimpled
2. Tropical plant
3. "Manner"
4. Clutch
5. Slender, thin or
6. Piece of furniture
7. Cui up
8. Holiday or
9. Inexpensive restaurant
10. A view
11. A city
12. The first
13. A city
14. A city
15. A city
16. A city
17. A city
18. A city
19. A city
20. A city



Diagramless 21 x 21  
By Frances Burton

ACROSS

1. Group and phrase
2. Sharp rise
3. A city
4. A city
5. A city
6. A city
7. A city
8. A city
9. A city
10. A city
11. A city
12. A city
13. A city
14. A city
15. A city
16. A city
17. A city
18. A city
19. A city
20. A city

DOWN

1. A city
2. A city
3. A city
4. A city
5. A city
6. A city
7. A city
8. A city
9. A city
10. A city
11. A city
12. A city
13. A city
14. A city
15. A city
16. A city
17. A city
18. A city
19. A city
20. A city

Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Time was when decoding two- or three-letter words was simple. Then "TV," "VCR," and "CD" came along to complicate things.
2. Boy gazing his soda is frazzled by buzzing bee falling right into it.
3. Chilli out, folks. No way can you shake hands with a clenched fist.
4. Cautious refusal to eat comedians because most really taste funny.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. JNS BWELE LHPJA EC BRQS CJ) WHEJCL

1KAZKEC NBJAWDKHKEC ARCVHAAJA

1ZKWE IKVJ JCHSVJ ZKQ LE VEEP VEPJ H

SKX WJVSJELN. — By Earl Huddleson

2. GOLF AZ GE GWGWE PQ ANN EGVWE. RTZ

NELRS SONWLY YLW RONJXL ESWER EP

QERS TLW EPZG YWSEN QMJJLY PDS. — By Rita Salazar

3. FLEW BLIARNSB BRUK BE LO MUOSIFSW

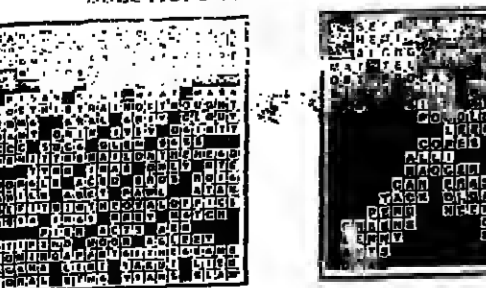
ROADRISK NO. UOW WILMOX. — By Ed Huddleson

4. KEHA R GFRN SEORTRAN OC GAN

NAVPLUGHUJ TUHFERNKUP. LP IEM SIF

PHL V ARU. GRPH. — By Deane H. McGee

SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



# Rwanda puts justice on hold

There aren't enough judges to try the thousands of people suspected of ethnic killings. Corine Lesnes reports from Kigali

SIX MONTHS after the military victory which brought it to power, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) is having great difficulty in setting up an efficient administration. This is particularly true of its justice system, which faces the task of bringing to trial thousands of people suspected of having taken part in ethnic massacres.

François-Xavier Nsanzuwa, aged 38, is the public prosecutor in the Rwandan capital, Kigali. His identity card says he is a Hutu. But, as he himself points out, he looks like a Tutsi. Like many other Rwandans, he comes from a family of mixed descent. In the time of his great-grandfather, who was a soothsayer, men of his clan married women from the Tutsi aristocracy.

Mr. Nsanzuwa's grandfather, who was born at the turn of the century, headed a group of dancers, his father taught catechism. They were both killed in April 1994. "The soldiers said we'd changed our identity cards. They said we were Tutsis masquerading as Hutus," says Mr. Nsanzuwa, who managed to take refuge in the Milles Collines Hotel in Kigali, before being evacuated on May 28 last year.

He has just returned to Rwanda from Europe, where he was invited by the International Federation of Human Rights. In recent months, he has done a lot of travelling — to Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, to Naples for an Interpol summit, and to Antwerp, where he got the offer of a study grant (which he already half-expected he had taken up). The justice minister was beginning to wonder whether his public prosecutor was going to do a bunk, the first new government minister to do so. His fears were unfounded. Although Mr. Nsanzuwa's plane had to turn back from Kigali airport because of fog and he was forced to spend three days mulling things over in Addis Ababa, he did eventually come home, still sporting the raspberry-coloured jacket he had worn everywhere on his travels.

As soon as he got back,



Rwandan refugee children through a volunteer handing out biscuits at the Goma orphanage (AFP photo)

one of his lawyer friends dropped in to welcome him home. Mr. Nsanzuwa immediately tried to persuade him to become a magistrate. "No way," the lawyer replied. "I'm too scared." Because of a shortage of magistrates, four out of five detainees are being held without charge. Mr. Nsanzuwa is the only person with any real legal training, and he has only five poorly qualified deputy public prosecutors to help him out. An extra deputy did turn up from Nyanzira, in eastern Rwanda, but he was arrested by soldiers who suspected him of having taken part in the massacre of 40 orphans.

Mr. Nsanzuwa's office is in the prison, so he doesn't need to travel about

too much. There is no shortage of vehicles for the military, but magistrates have to go everywhere on foot. The public prosecutor has already been threatened twice in his office by soldiers demanding the release of a relative. And in October, a car lent by the gendarmerie was stolen from him by soldiers at a road-block. The Justice Ministry protested to the Defence Ministry that "soldiers should be upholding the law instead of discouraging magistrates."

The International Red Cross puts the number of prisoners in the country as a whole at 14,200, as compared with only 6,000 three months ago. Most are awaiting trial. Kigali prison is designed to accommodate

2,000 inmates, but holds three times that number. Red Cross sources say everyone has enough room to sleep lying down, though this is difficult to believe when one sees how cramped the conditions are.

By common accord, the inmates have decided not to occupy the prison chapel, thus giving themselves a semblance of breathing space. No soldiers are allowed into the establishment, which, with its cleaning and security brigades, is self-managed. Dysentery is a constant threat, and there is an obsession with personal hygiene. The man who is soaping himself in the children's section was once ambassador to China. He was charged with being an "extremist" and arrested in

early August.

So far, about 100 detainees have pleaded guilty and are ready for trial. But no hearings have yet been scheduled.

A man who could easily be mistaken for a lawyer is, in fact, a prisoner in charge of juveniles. There are 144 of them in the jail, three of whom are only 11 years old. Did they know why they were there? "My father was a soldier," said one. Another had come back from Zaire in August to look for his family. He was arrested the following day.

A handful of boys aged 14 are suspected of more serious crimes. One of them confessed to having set fire to a house with its inhabitants inside, but later re-

tracted his story.

Mr. Nsanzuwa has publicly stated he thinks that about 20 per cent of detainees are innocent victims of false denunciations. He has come in for flak from members of the Rwandan diaspora in Brussels for making such an "anti-patriotic" statement. "They said that whites would pick on the figure of 20 per cent of innocent people, and forget the 80 per cent of guilty ones," he says. "But I just couldn't bring myself to disguise the facts."

Tutsis, particularly those living in Burundi who returned home in the wake of the RPF's victory, are suspected of having denounced Hutus simply because they

were occupying their homes. According to U.N. estimates, some 600,000 Tutsis have returned from Uganda, Burundi, Zaire, and even Kenya.

Five denunciations are needed before a person can be arrested. But the authorities have no way of ensuring that evidence does not come from members of the same family.

The Justice Ministry has received several promises of aid from abroad, but so far the only one to have materialised is a \$4 million gift from the United States. The public prosecutor's office was given a computer by Reporters Sans Frontières. But none of the secretaries know how to work it.

What makes Kigali prison different from those in Rubengeri or Butare is that only one or two people are released from it each week, and always under conditions of great secrecy. The last major release — of 40 inmates — took place three months ago. The judge who ordered their release, Gratien Ruhorahoza, vanished a few days later.

Mr. Nsanzuwa still believes in what he is doing strongly enough to want to keep going. All he asks of the army is that it should stop making life difficult for him by carrying out "massive arrests," and let him get on with his work in peace.

Le Monde

## Brown restates U.S. commitment

(Continued from page 1)

shuttle, said he had received "commitments... changes are being planned... are under way" in Jordanian laws related to these issues. Copyright requirements and protection of intellectual property rights are "very essential to encourage foreign investments," he said.

Mr. Abul Ragheb said:

"There are issues of concern to foreign investment. We intend to change (laws related to copyright and intellectual property rights) to make them compatible with

the climate for foreign investment."

The U.S. commerce secretary, who was accompanied by a delegation that includes the chief executives of at least eight American companies, welcomed a recent Jordanian government move to reduce customs duties on automobiles as "positive steps in the right direction," but said Washington wanted more.

"There are still some problems related to restrictions on engine size," said Mr. Brown, expressing hope that

"these will soon be eliminated."

That was a reference to the American stand that as long as Jordanian customs duties are calculated on the engine sizes of vehicles U.S. automobile exports to Jordan would not increase if only because the bulk of U.S. vehicles have higher capacity engines.

Washington favours customs duties levied on the cost price of the vehicle rather than the stable tariffs based on engine size as followed in Jordan.

## NATO to launch dialogue

(Continued from page 12)

The paper said Bashir Arabi, nicknamed Darashigh after a character in Indian films, was ambushed Tuesday by security forces as he was travelling with several members of his group near Lakhadaria. It said those accompanying him aboard several vehicles managed to flee.

Arabi was believed responsible for the 1992 murder of the regional police chief in Lakhadaria and was behind several sabotage incidents.

Although Le Matin did not disclose whether Arabi be-

longed to any of Algeria's extremist Muslim groups, militants in Lakhadaria are thought to be members of the Islamic Salvation Army while the more extremist Armed Islamic Group is said to control the towns in the region.

Gunmen opened fire on customers in a crowded cafe near the northeast Algerian town of Tizi Ouzou, killing two men and wounding several, the newspaper Liberte said.

One of the dead was headmaster at a local school, the

newspaper added.

Thirty minutes earlier, another group of suspected Muslim fundamentalists threw a home-made bomb into another cafe in the same Berber village, Agghris, wounding one customer, Le Matin said.

The armed attack, on Monday night, was the second in two days in the mountainous region. The previous night, two men, both aged 23, were killed in Tizi Ouzou as they sat in a cafe invaded by gunmen.

## Arabs, Israel, U.S. back open trade

(Continued from page 1)

Jordanian, Palestinian and United States trade leaders met on Feb. 7-8, 1995 in Taba, Egypt.

This meeting, not imaginable a few short years ago, underscores the commitment of the participants to the peace process and to the goal of economic cooperation and coordination, trade and development which underpin and are an integral part of that process.

Their meeting demonstrates that they will not be deterred by forces working against peace, nor by those who want to keep the region mired in the conflicts of the past.

"(It) was the first opportunity for trade leaders of the region and the U.S. to discuss the commercial issues which are important components of

the peace process."

The trade leaders: — underscored the message that the region is now open for business and that there is a new public-private partnership which will be sustained.

— Agreed to take all possible steps to remove barriers to free and open markets for trade and investments in the region.

— Supported all efforts to end the boycott of Israel.

— Recognised the importance to Palestinians... of enhancing investment and job creation.

— Declared the need for liberalisation and harmonisation of trade policies.

— Agreed to establish laws and regulations to promote regional investment and minimise restriction on capital or ownership.

— Reiterated support for

the establishment of a Middle East bank.

"The trade leaders announced the following steps:

— To assemble a group of government experts to identify and study ways to remove barriers to free and open markets for trade and investment in the region and in relation to the United States;

— To establish a group of government and private sector experts to develop a Middle East information highway;

— To ensure the best possible environment for unfettered business investment and trade;

— To cooperate in the organisation of training seminars, business missions... in support of regional private sector development;

— To meet again within 12 months to review progress.

## Sheikh's lawyer accuses judge of cover-up

(Continued from page 12)

There, he said, he saw Mohammed Salameh shoot an AK-47 rifle and Mahmud Abouhalima slap and grab a rifle from a man who carelessly fired the weapon in front of him. Both men were convicted last year in the trade centre bombing and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Also seen at the firing range was El Sayyid Nosair, who a year later was arrested in Kahane's assassination. Mr. Nosair was acquitted of the murder but convicted of related weapons charges. Mr. Fogle said. Mr. Nosair also is a defendant in the current case.

FBI Agent Steven Craig Chapman testified that wiretaps were put on Sheikh Abdul Rahman's telephone on Feb. 16, 1993, 10 days before the trade centre bombing. The wiretaps were continued until that June, producing 63 reels of recordings.

Emad Salem, an informant and million-dollar witness in the current trial, had accused the FBI in conversations he secretly recorded of failing to heed his warnings that a major bombing was imminent.

The evidence was presented after Judge Mukasey brushed aside the demand for a mistrial, warning jurors not to speculate about the seat left empty by Mr. Siddig Ali.

The judge told defence lawyers they could file papers for a mistrial, though he expressed doubts they would succeed. The judge did not tell the jury that Mr. Siddig Ali pleaded guilty.

Defence lawyers have filed the motion for a mistrial based on both judicial and prosecutorial misconduct. They argue it was improper for the judge to have allowed them to present opening arguments without knowledge that a cooperation agreement was in the works.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### King Hassan to meet Clinton next month

RABAT (AP) — King Hassan II, an American ally who has played a go-between role in the Mideast peace process, will visit the United States next month, the government announced. King Hassan will visit Washington from March 15 at the invitation of President Clinton, a communique from the cabinet said. The two leaders, who will be meeting for the first time, will discuss strengthening ties and cooperation as well as regional issues in North Africa and the Middle East, the communique said. Slim country that is relatively Westernised through industrialisation and Western investment, has served as a link between Washington and Arab countries and Palestinians. After Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres held their historic meeting with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Washington in 1993, they stopped in Morocco on their way home. It was the first time an Israeli leader openly visited Morocco. The two countries have opened interest offices in each other's capitals and are likely to formalise diplomatic relations in the coming months. King Hassan last visited the United States in February 1992.

### Maid burns child after row with father

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — A Sri Lankan housemaid is accused of pouring boiling water on a two-year-old girl after a row with the child's father, the Kuwaiti Times reported Wednesday. Tareq Al Hasawi, the employer, charged that his maid deliberately burnt the child while he and the mother were out. The incident took place just hours after they had a row and he threatened to sack her. Mr. Hasawi said. "She committed the crime on my innocent daughter as revenge." Police in Kuwait City arrested the Asian maid for questioning, the Kuwait Times said. A medical report showed that severe burns and deformed parts of the child's body. Around 180,000 foreign maids and domestic helpers work in Kuwait, most of them from Asia or Africa.

### Extremists kill detective in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Suspected Muslim extremists stabbed and shot a police detective to death Wednesday, apparently as part of their vendetta with police. The suspected militants waylaid Omar Mohammad Abdullah's car as he drove to work in El Minya, 220 kilometres south of Cairo, police officials said. The attackers repeatedly stabbed and shot him. The battle between police and the radicals has taken on the spirit of the vendettas traditional in southern Egypt. A spate of killings by one side is often followed by similar slayings a day or two later by the other. The especially violent slaying of the 50-year-old Abdullah fits the pattern of vengeance.

## Bihac fighting alarms U.N.

(Continued from page 1)

participation in the peace process after Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, in a change of tack, said he was ready to negotiate with Bosnian Serbs.

"Whoever tries to make an agreement (at Muslim) expense should remember that nothing can be solved without this government which is a military and political factor that cannot be ignored," Mr. Silajdzic told Reuters. Muslim authorities have

long feared ambitions by Zagreb and Belgrade to divide Bosnia between them.

Mr. Silajdzic said the Bosnian Muslim position had been strongly supported by the United States at a joint meeting with the Croatian government in Munich at the weekend.

"U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry warned at the meeting that there should be no agreement at the expense of Bosnia," he said.

## Syria says peace possible

(Continued from page 1)

"This is one of the targets of the EU tour of the area," Mr. Juppe added.

But he promised that the EU delegation would discuss the stalemate with Israel in a "clear tone."

"Our role is to build bridges and to make dialogue possible... we looked at our policy in the Middle East in that very spirit," he said.

Mr. Juppe noted: "We did not come to impose ourselves

... we will be of use if our role is accepted."

The official Syrian Arab News Agency reported that during Wednesday's discussions, Mr. Juppe "underlined the need for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights to the pre-June 4, 1967, borders, as well as a complete withdrawal from South Lebanon and other Israeli-occupied Arab territories."

## OECD unit sees aid gloom in place of 'peace dividend'

PARIS (AFP) — Industrial donor countries cut development aid budgets sharply in 1993-94, and poor nations, most of which are in Africa, might encounter severe problems if they do not act to attract private funds, an OECD body said Wednesday.

Japan was the biggest net donor in volume terms in 1993, providing official development assistance (ODA) worth \$11.3 billion, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said.

Next came the United States providing aid of \$9.7 billion, and then France at \$7.9 billion. But while French aid remained unchanged in real terms, Japan's ODA declined by 12 per cent and U.S. aid fell by nearly one-fifth, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) said.

The American chairman of DAC, James Michel, said that the "appalling" humanitarian emergency in Rwanda and continuing insecurity in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere highlighted a new significant claim on strained aid budgets.

The end of the cold war had prompted hopes of a "peace dividend", but there had instead been a "wave of instability, conflict and related migration" which had

become an impediment to sustainable development, he said in the DAC annual report.

Mr. Michel stressed that emergency aid and relief work had required \$3.2 billion worth of bilateral aid in 1993, a more than ten-fold increase from the figure in the early 1980s, alongside a "massive" rise in outlays by international agencies and soaring United Nations peacekeeping spending. "We need to improve our capacity for early warning of potential disaster before they occur," Mr. Michel said.

DAC, a key group in the 25-nation OECD, has 21 members — the OECD countries except Iceland, Greece, Mexico and Turkey.

They provide the bulk of the world's ODA — the main source of finance for low- and middle-income countries with little or no access to financial markets — as Arab aid has declined sharply and the former Soviet Union and east European states have left the ranks of donors to become recipients instead.

However, in 1993, the report, ODA disbursements from DAC donors plunged to \$55.9 billion from \$60.8 billion in 1992. A "sharp decline" was also a striking feature of the development cooperation scene in 1994, Mr. Michel said.

A continued surge in private flows — via direct investment, bank lending, bond issues and portfolio investment — nevertheless raised the overall net transfer of resources to the developing world to a record \$167 billion in 1993, by DAC's reckoning.

Private flows accounted for 56 per cent of the total, up from 40 per cent in 1989, reducing the share of ODA from over half at the end of the 1980s to 41 per cent in 1993, it said.

But the report said that private flows were heavily concentrated in a small number of better-off Asian and Latin American countries, and major low-income countries (LICs) such as China, India and Indonesia.

Private flows to the LICs "have in fact fallen by 25 per cent in real terms since 1990", leaving them "increasingly dependent on aid budgets... that are unlikely to see any significant expansion... in the near future," it said.

DAC said that these countries must therefore "do much more to attractiveness to private flows" which had proved they could react rapidly to improved prospects.

The LICs may otherwise "become increasingly marginalised," it warned, stressing the need to maintain positive ODA transfers to the poorest and most indebted countries as part of the debt strategy which has achieved progress mainly for middle-income countries.

The "painful irony" was that "many developing countries could now use more aid, and use it well, because they have been doing so much more to help themselves," the report commented.

Recalling initial fears that new demands on aid budgets from east Europe might cut into funding for poorer nations, the DAC said that official aid to Russia and other more advanced countries of the area had declined to \$6.9 billion in 1993 from \$7.3 billion in 1991 and \$7.1 billion in 1992.

Disbursements "continued to lag behind the large announced commitments" and remained "modest" at no more than 0.04 per cent of DAC donors' GNP, it said.

As ODA became a casualty of budgetary stringency after remaining broadly stable for several years, the report also said, the collective aid effort of DAC donors fell back to a 20-year low of 0.30 per cent of GNP, from 0.33 per cent in 1992 — just under half the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent.

## IMF lending rises to \$8.6b in 1994

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lending by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose to \$8.6 billion last year from \$7.7 billion in 1993, the "IMF Survey" reported.

Most of its loans are made at rates close to those charged by commercial banks, but its "concessional" — low-interest — loans tripled to about \$1.3 billion.

The fund's sister organisation, the World Bank, lent about \$23 billion in the year that ended last June 30, of which \$6.6 billion was lent at low interest to the poorest countries.

Fund lending is designed to help a country straighten out its financial difficulties. Borrowers are required to follow agreed policies, such as re-

ductions in the government's deficit. Loans from the World Bank are generally for specific projects such as schools or roads, though the bank also does some "structural adjustment" lending like the fund's loans.

Both fund and bank are owned by governments. Loans are also made to governments, except for about \$2 billion a year from the bank's International Finance Corporation, which lends largely to private business.

Lending by the fund rose to countries formerly under communist rule, reaching \$2.8 billion, compared with \$2 billion in 1993. That was the first year of what the fund calls its "systemic trans-

formation facility". The money has gone to 18 countries, with Russia getting most of it — more than \$3 billion of the \$4.8 billion total.

At the end of the year, the fund had lending arrangements with 57 of the 179 member countries. Under these arrangements, loans are paid out in installments. The installments are halted if the fund finds that the borrower has not lived up to the agreed terms — or, as sometimes happens, the borrower

finds it does not need the money.

The biggest offer last year was to Poland, about \$1.02 billion, of which about \$400 million was disbursed during the year.

Current arrangements, some of them dating to 1991, offered about \$16.7 billion in loans. Undrawn balances of these offers amount to some \$7.8 billion, but the figures do not show how much is awaiting disbursement and how much will not be disbursed.

## EU survey paints rosy picture for '95 but gloom in east

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Economic prospects for the European Union (EU) look bright this year, but an EU survey also described increasing income gaps in central and eastern Europe.

The latest European economy survey, which was released Tuesday, showed that investment in industries in the EU was expected to increase by nine per cent in volume and 12 per cent in value this year, after slight declines in 1994.

The investment expectations, the most optimistic since 1989, underpinned mounting confidence in the economic future of the 15-nation EU, the survey said.

The optimism of business leaders comes after several years of sagging profits, rising unemployment and recession.

After a four-per cent drop in industrial investment in Greece last year, volume is expected to increase by 33 per cent this year. In the Netherlands, industrial investments are expected to rise by 20 per cent in 1995, after falling by that much last year.

Luxembourg is the exception to the rule, with the

forecast of an 11 per cent drop in industrial investment. Finland, Austria and Sweden, which joined the EU on Jan. 1, were not included.

Overall, the survey said, "there are no discernible signs of any interruption in the economic recovery."

The EU economy is expected to grow by an inflation-adjusted 2.9 per cent this year and 3.2 per cent in 1996.

In sharp contrast, central and eastern European economies still lag far behind and "prospects for strong growth are still not good." The survey added the economies are still hampered by weak investment, high inflation rates and huge budget deficits.

The countries covered in the survey were Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania.

Most wrestled, free from Soviet-style central government half a decade ago, but the transition to a market economy has been less than smooth.

"The high hopes of four years ago are giving way to despondency, frustration and apathy," the report said.

## Kuwait budget outline projects \$4.5b deficit

KUWAIT (AP) — The government has approved a budget outline for 1995-96, projecting a deficit of 1.29 billion dinars (\$4.52 billion), a finance ministry official said Wednesday.

He said revenue was forecast at 3.01 billion dinars (\$10.53 billion) and expenditure at 4.30 billion dinars (\$15.05 billion).

The shortfall was slightly over the current year's 1.76 billion dinars (\$6.2 billion).

This outline was approved in a cabinet meeting Sunday, according to the official, who requested anonymity. It will now go to the 50-seat parliament for approval.

Despite economic woes caused by low oil prices and the costs of the 1991 Gulf war that liberated Kuwait from a devastating Iraqi occupation, the emirate still hopes for a zero-deficit by the year 2000.

The official would not elaborate on how the deficit was narrowed.

But Finance Minister Nasser Al Rowadhan said in an interview published in the daily Al Watan Tuesday that the government was cutting expenses of senior officials by up to 50 per cent and curbing spending on construction projects.

It also plans to collect about 50 million dinars (\$175 million) in fees on services it

had been subsidising or offering free of charge for decades, he said.

Many legislators have vowed not to let the government impose such fees, saying it should instead be more careful with its own spending and stricter with embezzlers of public funds.

The finance minister said oil revenues for 1995-96 were calculated on the basis of a daily production two million barrels, Kuwait's current quota as decreed by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Prices were estimated at \$13 a barrel, well below the group's target price of \$21 a barrel.

Sheikh Al Rowadhan told

the paper that salaries of civil servants, which make up the largest chunk of expenditure, could not be reduced. These were increased by one per cent to 1.15 billion dinars (\$4.02 billion) in the budget projections.

Most Kuwaitis are hired by the government for high salaries and very good benefits. Civil servants are notorious for low productivity and are not attracted to working in the private sector.

Privatisation plans have been stymied by the failure to find an alternative for civil servants who would be left jobless if private companies take over.

## Japan's trade surplus hits new high in '94

TOKYO (R) — Japan's trade surplus hit a record in 1994, but the broader current-account surplus shrank as imports surged and more Japanese travelled abroad, economists and government officials said Wednesday.

The surplus in the current account, the broadest measure of trade in goods and services, narrowed to \$129.33 billion in 1994 from a record surplus of \$131.45 billion in 1993.

"The data confirmed

Japan's current account surplus has finally peaked out and started to decline," Fuji Research Institute chief economist Masaru Takagi said. "I expect the surplus to fall by \$10 billion to \$15 billion this year."

Japan's current account surplus in yen terms declined by 9.5 per cent to 13.22 trillion yen in calendar 1994, posting the second straight year-on-year decline. Meanwhile, the surplus in dollar terms also declined by 1.6 per

cent to 129.33 billion in 1994, posting its first decline since 1990.

"I think vigilance is still needed on the surplus, but basically the current account surplus is now on a shrinking trend," a finance ministry official said.

At the same time, Japan's trade surplus swelled to a record \$145.82 billion in 1994 from \$141.51 billion in 1993, which was the previous record.

The stunning trade figure

had already been presaged by data released last month showing Japan's trade surplus, on a customs-cleared basis, surged to a record \$121.17 billion in 1994 from the previous record \$120.24 billion in 1993.

The current account surplus widened to \$12.81 billion in December from a surplus of \$12.72 billion a year earlier as firms rushed exports before year-end and new year holidays.

## Gulf Air launches FALCON frequent flyer programme

Gulf Air launched the FALCON frequent flyer programme, the first fully-fledged passenger loyalty programme from a Middle East Airline.

Dec. 1994 saw FALCON's invitation only soft launch by the national carrier of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar.

Feb. 1, introduced the programme to residents of the GCC region. FALCON will be made available to

residents of other countries worldwide throughout 1995.

On announcing the launch PCE Salim Bin Ali Assiabi said: "A team of International Aviation consultants has been working with Gulf Air for the last two years to develop a frequent flyer programme specific to our requirements. The result of this is a unique and product — FALCON."

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



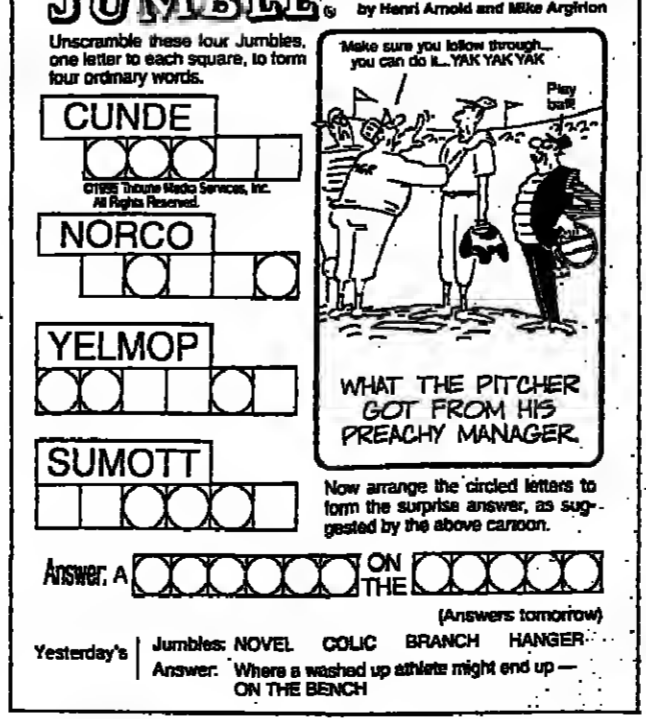
## Watt'n'Jeff



## THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



## JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



## THE Daily Crossword by Al Becker







Major League Baseball players David Cone (right), Jay Bell (center) and players representative Donald Fehr (left) arrive at the White House late 7 February after being summoned by U.S. President Clinton. Clinton called players and owners to the White House in an effort to end the six month baseball strike before the beginning of spring training (AFP photo).

## Clinton asks Congress to act on baseball strike

WASHINGTON (R) — After failing in his bid to end the Major League Baseball strike, President Clinton has thrown the ball to Congress by asking for legislation to settle the dispute through binding arbitration.

"The players and owners still remain apart on their differences, clearly they are not capable of settling this strike without an umpire," Clinton said late Tuesday night after meeting with the two sides for four hours.

Speaking to reporters in the White House press room, Clinton said the only way to settle the strike, appeared to be for Congress to pass legislation requiring binding arbitration.

"Unless they do, we may not have baseball in 1995," Clinton said. Spring training camps are to open in Florida and Arizona next week and the season is due to start in April.

Clinton said he would send a bill to Congress and asked that it be considered as quickly as possible.

But Senate Majority Leader Edw Dole of Kansas and House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia, both opposition Republicans, immediately came out against the idea, saying Congress should stay out of the dispute.

"We maintain our view that Congress is ill-suited to resolving private labour disputes," Dole and Gingrich said in a joint statement.

Clinton called the players and owners to the White House late on Tuesday afternoon after they failed to reach an agreement through negotiations by the mid-afternoon deadline he set.

Clinton said it appeared at times during the talks that the parties were close to an agreement, but they fell short.

"The American people are the real losers. I have done all I could," a frustrated Clinton said.

"I think both sides have their share of blame," he added.

The players went on strike last August over plans by the owners to impose a cap on salaries. The owners cancelled the rest of the 1994 season and the World Series in September.

Mediator W.J. Utery said

this was the most difficult labour negotiation in his 30-year career.

"The parties were very far apart. There is deep distrust among the parties," Utery said.

Labour secretary Robert Reich said he hoped the players and owners would continue negotiations and would voluntarily accept binding arbitration.

Donald Fehr, chief negotiator for the players union, said the players were willing to accept arbitration on all issues and to play the 1995 season under the current labour agreement.

The owners have insisted that they must have some limits over rapidly rising player salaries averaging over \$1 million a year per player.

Rep. Jim Bunning, a Kentucky Republican and a former star Major League pitcher, told ABC's "nightline": "I guess he (Clinton) thought that... he could bring them together and he would be the hero for having a 1995 baseball season. Unfortunately, I'm afraid he's going to have egg on his face."

## Romario makes headlines — but not on the soccer field

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Romario always had a gift for making headlines. But lately, they have all been the wrong kind.

The star of Brazil's World Cup champion team has been embroiled in an endless string of personal troubles, from charges of fighting with restaurant patrons to a car accident to a possible paternity suit in Spain.

Meanwhile, he has yet to play an official game for his new club, Flamengo. Hampered by injuries, Romario has seen his replacement, Mazinho, shine in the centre-forward spot.

"Everything bad happened at once," he admits.

The honeymoon isn't over — yet. Rio adores its hometown star and is tolerant of his "bad boy" antics. And Romario's talent on the field is unquestioned. Still, fans are concerned.

"Romario takes away Flamengo's peace," read a headline Tuesday in the Rio daily Jornal Do Brasil.

It's all quite different from the euphoria that greeted Romario on his return from Spain barely three weeks ago. Cheering fans lined the streets as Romario paraded through the city atop a firetruck, the conquering hero come home.

He immediately said he needed time off to recover from the stress of Brazil's

World Cup championship and his \$4.5 million transfer from Spain's Barcelona.

While Flamengo got ready for the Rio de Janeiro state championship, Romario was playing foot-volleyball on the beach and nightclubbing. Fans were understanding — Romario was a special case.

He was soon in the news again, threatening a photographer who shot a picture of him entering a car with a young woman. Newspapers reported that Romario's wife, Monica, had sought a separation.

On Jan. 27, he made his debut for Flamengo in an exhibition game with Uruguay. The teams tied 1-1, and Romario showed little of his old brilliance.

Then he was off to Portugal to receive FIFA's award as the world's best player in 1994. Meanwhile, Flamengo was playing — and winning — in the state tournament. Injuries to his thigh and rib kept him off the team again last Sunday as Flamengo, led by Mazinho, walloped Friburguense 6-0. Meanwhile, Romario was having his own wild weekend.

On Friday, a woman accused him of hitting her when she asked for an autograph in a restaurant. Romario said he only pushed her lightly.

Two days later, a city councillor in the beach resort of Cabo Frio said Romario

shoved away a 10-year-old peanut vendor. The councilman said he tried to defend the boy and was kicked and punched by Romario's bodyguards.

On Monday night, Romario's imported car was rammed by another driver in Copacabana Beach. And the news came from Spain that a Barcelona woman would seek to name him in a paternity suit.

"The phase isn't good," he said in an interview Tuesday with Jornal Do Brasil. "That's life."

Still, he doesn't regret coming home.

"Despite some of the bad things that have happened to me off the field and the persecution by some society columnists, I'm motivated," he said. "Sad, but motivated."

Flamengo coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo, a strict disciplinarian, has shown surprising forbearance with his star.

"A time comes when it's necessary to be a bit more lenient," said Luxemburgo. "Perhaps, taking a time out from his nightlife..."

That might be easier now that Romario's healthy, said Paulo Angioni, Flamengo's director of soccer.

"Now Romario will have to show up more at practice, (so) he will be less exposed," Angioni said.



Brazilian soccer star Romario holds the Golden Boot trophy for the best striker of the World Soccer Championship '94 as FIFA's President Joao Havelange looks on, during a ceremony held at Lisbon Cultural Centre Jan. 30 (AFP photo).

Romario was to play Wednesday in an exhibition game against Atletico Mineiro. His debut in the state tournament is scheduled for Sunday, in Rio's classic "Fla-Flu" rivalry between Flamengo and Fluminense.

Romario agrees that what he needs is soccer.

"If I were playing, there would be less time to think about other things," he said. "It's time to return to scoring goals."



Rieja de Espana rounds the weather mark and prepares to set a spinnaker ahead of Team New Zealand on Tuesday during the America's Cup Challenger series. Although Spain lead by 02:37 at the first leeward mark, Team New Zealand went ahead to win by 20:50 (AFP photo).

### SPORTS IN BRIEF

#### 'Bankrupt' Borg faces probe Fogdore in spine operation

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Former Swedish tennis superstar Bjorn Borg, a self-declared bankrupt, is actually earning between 1.3-2.6 million dollars a year, evening newspaper Expressen claimed here on Tuesday. The paper alleged the cash was being paid into a bank account in the Netherlands Antilles by two companies, Scandinavian Underwear and Scandinavian Footwear, which market Bjorn Borg products. Five-time Wimbledon winner Borg, 39, has told Swedish tax authorities he is bankrupt and does not even own "a colour television or a stereo." But the paper claimed \$23.33 million worth of Bjorn Borg underwear would be sold this year, while his brand-named shoes would bring in another \$12 million, his sunglasses \$2.66 million and perfumes four million.

#### Karpov settles for a draw

SANGHINNGAR, India (AP) — Russian grand master Anatoly Karpov settled for a draw against Boris Gelfand of Belarus after missing several chances in the second of their ten-game World Chess Championship semifinals on Tuesday in southern India. The game was agreed drawn after 46th move as Karpov checked Gelfand's king repeatedly. In their opening match on Monday, the two grand masters had also settled for a draw. In the other semifinals, American grand master Gata Kamsky forced a draw after 27 moves and split points in his second game against Valery Salvo of Russia.

#### Swimming chiefs tighten doping control

LAUSANNE (AP) — The International Swimming Federation (FINA) wants to know where the world's top swimmers train so they can be drug-tested at short notice. FINA last month contacted all member federations asking for the addresses of training venues for their swimmers in the world top 20 to enable random drug tests to be carried out. "In order to carry out testing very quickly, we need to know where the swimmers can be found at a given moment," said FINA director general Cornel Marculescu. "All federations have replied except France, Italy, Peru and Poland."

#### Romania lifts ban on high jumper

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanian sports authorities have lifted a three-year ban imposed last year on high jumper Galina Astafei after she applied for German citizenship. "Such a good athlete must be free to compete, she must not stay on the sidelines," Romanian Athletics Federation president Iolanda Balas said. "What really matters in the end is not the country for which she competes but her performance." Astafei, 1992 Barcelona Olympic silver medalist, competed for Romania at an indoor meeting in Stuttgart, Germany, last Sunday when she set a Romanian record with a winning leap of 2.03 metres. But to be able to compete for Germany at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Astafei has two more hurdles to clear — the acquisition of German citizenship and the approval of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). An IOC decision rests on formal agreement by the Romanian Olympic Committee (ROC).

#### Becker advances in Marseille

MARSEILLE (AP) — Bouncing back from his first-round ouster in the Australian Open, top-seeded Boris Becker advanced in straight sets Tuesday in the \$506,000 Marseille Open tennis tournament. Becker defeated Juan Albert Viloca of Spain, 6-2, 6-4. Becker, the three-time Wimbledon champion, was eliminated from the Australian Grand Slam tournament in the first round by American Patrick McEnroe. Since then he teamed up with Michael Stich to defeat Croatia in Davis Cup eliminations.

## Trapattoni urged to quit Bayern Auguin leads BOC round-the-world race

BONN (R) — Bayero Munich coach Giovanni Trapattoni should pack his bags and go back to Italy now because his heart is not in the job, according to Udo Lattek, the ex-coach who made the club a European power in the 1970s.

Lattek, who steered Bayern Munich to six league titles in the 1970s and 1980s, said Trapattoni's recent comments that only half of his mind was in Munich indicated that he should go home before his scheduled departure at the end of the season.

"When I hear that Trap can't perform to the best of his ability because his family isn't happy in Munich and he still has 50 per cent of his mind in Italy then I have some advice: take the other 50 per cent back, Trap," Lattek wrote in a hard-hitting newspaper column.

Former Juventus coach Trapattoni, who has had problems teaching his tactical Savoir-Faire to Bayern's inexperienced team because of his poor German, has failed to inspire the club.

## Auguin leads BOC round-the-world race

NEW YORK (AP) — Defending champion Christophe Auguin opened up a 66-mile (106-kilometre) lead and became the first sailor to cross the international dateline Monday in the third leg of the BOC round-the-world solo race.

The feat gave him one long day on the water — 48 hours, to be exact — as winds slackened off considerably.

"I'm (nearly) stopped three miles to the north of Antipodes island," Auguin messaged race headquarters. "The win is not here but this island is superb."

After trailing for two days, Auguin regained the lead Saturday from fellow Frenchman Jeao Luc Van Den Heede, who remained in second place Monday.

Steve Pettengill, of the United States, was in third place, 115 miles (184 kilometres) behind Auguin. Pettengill narrowed the gap to as close as 24 miles (38 kilometres) over the weekend but could not keep up with Auguin's speed.

South Africa's Jean Jacques Provoyeur was in fourth.

After a brief detour Sunday to bluff, New Zealand, for mainsail repairs, David Scully, of the United States,

rejoined the race. He was in fifth place Monday while Arnet Taylor Jr. of the United States, was sixth, bringing up the rear of the Class I category of 50- to 60-foot (80- to 96-metre) boats.

As usual, the battle in Class II, for 40- to 50-foot (64- to 80-metre) yachts, raged between Italy's Giovanni Soldini and Australia's David Adams. Adams began the leg with a day's lead over Soldini, but the Italian has kept a narrow lead for the past week. On Monday, it was an eight-mile (13-kilometre) gap.

The three next competitors were 300 miles (480 kilometres) behind the Class II leaders, but within five miles (eight kilometres) of each other: Robin Davis of Britain, Alan Nebauer of Australia, and Chaoiab Vaughan of Britain.

Fourteen sailors left Sydney, Australia on Jan. 29, aiming for a finish line nearly 7,000 miles (11,200 kilometres) to the east in punta del Este, Uruguay.

Their number was cut to 13 on Sunday, when Nigel Rowe, the British skipper of the 48-foot (77-kilometre), Class II yacht "Sky Catcher," announced he was withdrawing.

## Popov, Van Almsick win swimming races

SAINT VINCENT, Italy (R) — German World champion Franziska Van Almsick made a successful return to Italian waters on Tuesday when she enjoyed a double success in a World Cup short-course meeting.

Van Almsick, a controversial winner of the 200 metres freestyle in the long-course world championships in Rome last September, won over the same distance on Tuesday before adding a 50-metre freestyle win for good measure.

Van Almsick won gold in Rome last September despite failing to qualify for the final. Compatriot Dagmar Hase dropped out to allow the German to swim and she responded by taking gold in a world record time.

The sport's glamour girl provided no such fireworks in Saint Vincent but clocked two impressive times, taking the 200 metres in one minute 57.87 seconds and the 50 metres in 25.45 seconds.

Russian sprint king Alexander Popov made a winning debut in his first appearance in the World Cup this year.



Franziska Van Almsick

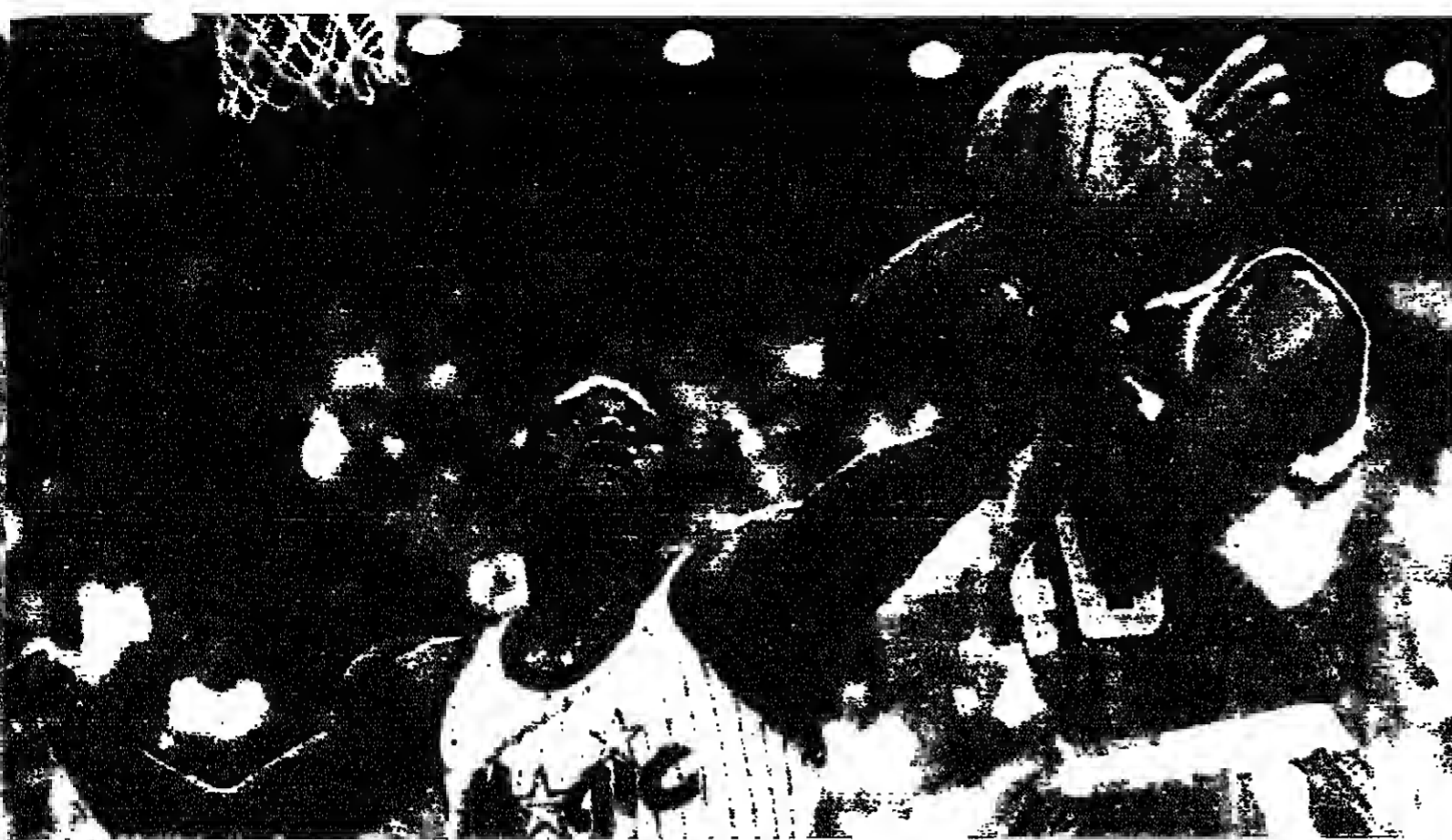
Popov, world long-course champion in 50 and 100 metres freestyle, won over the longer distance in 49.60 seconds, beating New Zealander Danyon Loader into second place.

His fellow Russian Vladimir Selkov — another, Rome gold medalist — won the 100 metres backstroke while Finn Antti Kasvio took the 400 metres freestyle. Kasvio is the 200 metres freestyle world champion in the 50-metre pool.

The meeting in Saint Vincent, in the Alpine region of Valle D'Aosta, is the fourth of seven World Cup events this season.

TODAY	Cinema Tel.: 634144	Cinema Tel.: 699238	Cinema Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Maskini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
	Yusra, Mahmoud Hamedieh in <b>The Immigrant</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Bruce Willis...in <b>DIE HARD II</b> Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:30, 10:30 The movie: THE LION KING will be shown on Fridays and Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.	CONCORD '1' <b>ROBOCOP '3'</b> Shows: 12:30, 2:45, 6:30, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD '2' Sylvester Stallone — Sharon Stone in <b>The Specialist</b> Shows: 2:45, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	SUM'A in the satirical play <b>HI CITIZEN</b> Composed and directed by Mohammed Al Shewachah Daily from 8:30 p.m. Children's Play <b>The Ninja Turtles Show</b> Directed by Akram Abul Ragheb Daily at 10:30 p.m.	Presents <b>Abu Awwad</b> In the social comedy <b>Punctured Bag</b> The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: The political satire: <b>AL SALAM YA SALAM</b> at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed on Saturdays & Sundays

# Sports



Seattle SuperSonics forward Shawn Kemp (#40) drives to the basket as Orlando Magic's Shaquille O'Neal (L) gets a hand on the ball at the Orlando Arena

## Abdul-Jabbar reflects on the state of pro basketball

NEW YORK (AP) — Here's a little room in the National Basketball Association of the '90s for the sky hook. Even the man who originated that graceful and effective shot, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, sees its time is past.

"Dr. J and Michael Jordan really ruined it for all of us guys," Abdul-Jabbar said. "Nobody wants to see somebody playing with their back to the basket."

"People would rather look at Michael Jordan on the highlight film than be seen hooting the sky hook. It's just an element of style."

The former Los Angeles Lakers star, who returned to his hometown Tuesday to be enshrined as a Hall of Fame inductee, sees little similarity between the game he played or a record 20 seasons and he role of the today's center like Orlando's Shaquille O'Neal.

Television has changed the face of the game, Abdul-Jabbar said.

"Certainly style over substance is important now," he said. "They didn't have 'play

of the day' when I was playing."

What hasn't changed: A dominating center is still considered a ticket to the NBA finals.

Abdul-Jabbar, the NBA's leading scorer with 38,387

regular season points, led Milwaukee to one title and the Lakers to five more. That came after a college career in which he won three NCAA championships under UCLA coach John Wooden.

"I was able to beat one-on-

one coverage every time and shoot high percentage shots that created a lot of stress on the defense," he said.

Not even O'Neal, although Abdul-Jabbar acknowledges that the muscular magic center has developed his own

dominating high-percentage game based on getting dunks off offensive rebounds.

"I saw his rap video where he said he don't need no book, so I'm not going to offer him any advice," Abdul-Jabbar said.

Results				
Indiana	95	Charlotte	92 (OT)	
Cleveland	90	Philadelphia	84	
Detroit	119	Washington	115	
Milwaukee	95	New York	87	
Minnesota	109	Golden State	100	
Phoenix	114	Dallas	113	
San Antonio	85	Denver	83	
Utah	106	Seattle	103	
	101	LA Clippers	88	

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct.	GB
Orlando	36	10	.783	—
New York	29	16	.644	6½
Boston	18	27	.400	17½
New Jersey	19	30	.388	18½
Miami	16	29	.356	19½
Philadelphia	14	34	.292	23
Washington	11	33	.250	24

Central Division				
Charlotte	30	17	.638	—
Cleveland	28	18	.609	1½
Indiana	27	18	.600	2
Chicago	23	23	.500	6½
Atlanta	21	26	.447	9
Milwaukee	18	29	.383	12
Detroit	17	28	.378	12

Western Conference				
Midwest Division				
Utah	35	12	.745	—
San Antonio	30	14	.682	3½
Houston	28	16	.636	5½
Denver	20	25	.444	14
Dallas	18	27	.400	16
Minnesota	11	35	.239	23½

Pacific Division				
Phoenix	37	10	.787	—
Seattle	32	12	.727	3½
L.A. Lakers	28	16	.636	7½
Sacramento	25	19	.568	10½
Portland	24	26	.454	11½
Golden State	13	31	.295	22½
L.A. Clippers	7	40	.149	30

## Agassi cruises, Chang stumbles at San Jose Open

SAN JOSE (Agencies) — Top seed Andre Agassi cruised while second seed Michael Chang stumbled on Tuesday before coming away with opening-round victories at the \$328,000 San Jose Open.

Agassi, fresh from his Australian Open title, reeled off the first eight games en route to a 6-0 6-2 win over left-hander Fernando Meligeni of Brazil. Chang, meanwhile, hit a humpy patch in the second set before outdusting Chilean Marcelo Rios 6-4 7-5 in a baseline battle.

Agassi, 24, was anxious to get back to business after a week off following a victory in Melbourne. "I couldn't wait to get back court," said the world's second-ranked player behind Andre Sampras. "I really enjoy it."

But he was surprised at the

way he dominated Meligeni, ranked 85th, in just 53 minutes.

Looking back, it's tough to beat anybody 6-0 6-2, said Agassi, who won 57 of 89 points. "So it is surprising. But when you're out there you're not thinking about how surprising it is, you just continue with your game plan."

Chang, displayed a powerful serve clocked at 124 mph (200 kph) and an unrelenting groundstroking game to take the opening set.

But the world's sixth-ranked player and Australian Open semifinalist fell behind 2-5 to the 19-year-old left-hander before reeling off the next five games for the victory.

Korda wins in Dubai

In Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Germany's Car-

sten Arriens, ranked 222nd in the world, beat British veteran Jeremy Bates 6-3, 6-4 to move into the second round of the Dubai Open tennis championship Tuesday.

Another German, Oliver Gross, went down to sixth seed Petr Korda of the Czech Republic who coasted into the next round with an easy 6-1, 6-2 win.

Korda, who did not play for his country in the Davis Cup this year, arrived in Dubai a week ago and played a lot of golf, which he said relaxes him, before the tournament opened.

But Korda, the Grand Slam Cup winner in Germany last year and currently ranked No. 20, pulled back with a vicious backhand down the line to lead 2-1 and with breaks in the 4th and 8th games, Gross had no chance.



Andre Agassi

## Norwegian speedskater wins Jesse Owens Award

NEW YORK (AP) — Speedskater Johann Olav Koss is a gold-medalist on and off the ice.

The 26-year-old Norwegian medical student thrilled the home crowd last year at the Lillehammer Olympics, setting world records in winning at 1,500, 5,000 and 10,000 metres. In 1992, he took gold and silver medals at Albertville.

For those performances and his humanitarian work, Koss received the Jesse Owens International Award on Tuesday night from the International Amateur Athletic Federation. The award goes to the athlete who personifies sportsmanship and commitment to global cooperation, as well athletic accomplishment.

"He's the first winner we've had who's been both a great athlete and such a great humanitarian," IAAF president Herb Douglas said.

Koss, a student at the University of Oslo, has visited underdeveloped countries regularly since 1990, contributing funds and trying to instill hope in deprived children.

His travels, including some during his youth, have taken him to Egypt, India, Nepal, Eritrea, Israel and Sarajevo.

He made three trips to Eritrea, a country that gained independence from Ethiopia at the cost of war and famine. On his first visit, in September 1993, he was Lillehammer Olympic Aid's ambassador.

"I saw children on the streets, struggling every day of their lives," Koss said of the one-week visit. "When you see that, you see sports in another dimension. You see what sports can do for these children."

"I saw great joy in their faces when they saw soccer balls. They were unbelievably happy."

He saw a boy playing on one leg, and boys making balls out of shirts tied together. He was deeply moved.

"It also gave me the motivation to develop my skills through the Olympics," Koss said. "And it made me appreciate what my team,

my country and my parents had given me."

He got the children interested in sports and had them laughing. He tried to give them hope and felt uplifted by the enthusiasm of the malnourished youngsters.

"Sometimes the poorest people have the richest spirit," he said.

After one of his Olympic victories, Koss said he was donating all his bonus money — about \$30,000 — to Olympic Aid.

He then asked his countrymen to donate 10 kroner (\$1.37) to Olympic Aid for every Norwegian gold medal. The response was overwhelming as Norway won 10 gold medals.

The government, which already had donated \$135,000, increased that by \$1 million. The Norwegian Olympic Committee, the International Olympic committee, the city of Oslo and other groups each matched Koss' contribution. Volunteers collecting money in the streets of Lillehammer brought in another \$200,000.

Koss was shocked and delighted. He also auctioned off his Olympic skates for \$90,000.

Overall, Olympic Aid raised about \$10 million during its 1994 campaign and distributed it through charities to war-torn areas. In addition, Koss encouraged Norwegian youngsters to donate sports gear to the children of Eritrea.

Surprisingly, Olympic Aid now is in danger of vanishing.

The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games has shown little interest in continuing the programme, pleading a lack of resources. Koss took the case to the IOC, but the organisation has not been encouraging.

Now, Koss, a special representative of Sport for UNICEF, hopes to help that organisation raise funds. He also wants to develop Olympic ruce — a plea for peace in all areas of conflict throughout the world during the Atlanta Games.

"I guess that really would be too much to ask," Koss said. "Today, there are 96 armed conflicts in the world, the most since 1920. Our goals is for 10 or 15 conflicts to stop."

## Fan killed in France; games cancelled

PARIS (AP) — Professional soccer games have been cancelled in the Paris region this weekend after a fan who was shot during a fight at a soccer match died Tuesday.

Youth and Sports Minister Michele Alliot-Marie said all pro matches from the first division on down would be called off this weekend to encourage "deep reflection" among youths and soccer fans.

"This tragedy, which does not appear to have stemmed from the sporting match,

nevertheless shows that sports, or at least certain sports, serve as a support and pretext for the expression of violence," she said.

Douadou Atout, a 22-year-old supporter of club Berbere, was shot and critically wounded by a fan of the local team of Drancy after the two teams met Sunday in Drancy, north of Paris. Atout died of his injuries in a Paris hospital Tuesday.

Alliot-Marie expressed her "total condemnation of this unjustifiable act" and said

the decision by the league of Paris/Île de France to cancel the games would provide "the occasion for a deep reflection, led by educators, among youths so that such a tragedy will never happen again."

Sbe called a meeting for among representatives of the French Football Federation, interior ministry, social affairs ministry and an inter-ministerial delegation on urban problems to discuss the issue.

## Trans-Atlantic swimmer 125km from shore

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados (AP) — Trans-Atlantic swimmer Guy Delage was 78 miles (125 kilometres) from the shore of this Caribbean island Tuesday morning.

"He's doing very well, and I think he's getting more excited as he gets closer," said Kevin Plagman, a U.S. spokesman for Oceanantes, the Paris-based technical team monitoring the French swimmer's trip.

Delage was reported 78 miles (125 kilometres) east-southeast of Barbados at 7 a.m. (1100 GMT) and was expected to reach land sometime Thursday. His backers were hoping he touch the shore at a beach on the southern end of the island.

There had been concern that Delage might miss Barbados, the eastern-most island in the Caribbean.

But Plagman said that "we're 99.5 per cent sure that he's headed toward (landing) in Barbados." A Barbados coast guard ship will be accompanying the swimmer on the last bit of the (3,840-kilometre) journey.

Delage, 42, is swimming

across the Atlantic with a 31-inch (79-cm) flotation device that contains a survival mini-raft, destination kit, distress beacon, compass and

rifle to ward off sharks. He swims about 10 hours a day and sleep aboard a (4.5-metre) raft that is accompanying him.

### GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSH  
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#### ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠QJ10 ♠8732 ♠43  
The bidding has proceeded:  
North East South West  
1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass  
What action do you take?  
A.—This one is too close to call. Our slight preference is to pass—we have a ruffing value and partner could have an unbalanced hand. However, anyone who elects to bid one no trump cannot be faulted, since most of the hand's values are in the unbid suit.
- Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠76 ♠93 ♠A854 ♠Q842  
The bidding has proceeded:  
North East South West  
1♠ 1♥ ?  
What action do you take?  
A.—While you don't have much, you do have an ace and reasonable four-card support for partner's suit. Bid two clubs. What if partner opened a prepared club with only three cards in the suit? So what! The 4-3 fit could be your best spot.
- Q.3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠76 ♠1083 ♠K9 ♠87632  
The bidding has proceeded:  
North East South West  
1♥ Pass 1♥ 2♥ ?  
What action do you take?  
A.—A poor collection, to be sure, but your hand does revalue to some seven points in support of hearts. Raise to two hearts, even if only for its preemptive value. Experience shows it is poor tactics to pass with four-card support for opener's
- Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠QJ72 ♠84 ♠E76 ♠AQ106  
The bidding has proceeded:  
South West North East  
1♥ Pass 1♥ 2♥ ?  
What action do you take?  
A.—Do not make an unforced rebid with a minimum opener, unless you have something important to tell partner. Here your four-card support for North's suit is a considerable asset, so raise to two spades.
- Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠AQ94 ♠75 ♠A852 ♠743  
The bidding has proceeded:  
West North East South  
1♥ Pass 2♥ Pass  
Pass 2♥ Pass ?  
What action do you take?  
A.—Remember, partner couldn't overcall the one-heart opening bid with one spade and doesn't deserve to be handed for not letting the enemy buy the hand at two hearts. Pass—North has already bid all of your values.
- Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠74 ♠EJ74 ♠A865 ♠A103  
The bidding has proceeded:  
North East South West  
1♥ 2♥ ?  
What do you bid now?  
A.—You must tell partner you have a strong hand in support of hearts. The textbook way to do that is to cue-bid the enemy suit and there's no reason for you to choose another course. Bid three spades.

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## Jordanian stand unchanged on Chechenya, but at odds with Russian handling of crisis

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan considers Chechenya as part of the Russian Federation but does not condone Moscow's "inhuman" handling of the separatist rebellion in the Caucasus republic, senior officials said Wednesday.

The officials also said Jordan viewed the conflict in Chechenya as over and would seek information of Chechens of Jordanian origin said to be detained by Russian forces or stranded in the area since Moscow sent in its army to Chechenya to quell the separatist movement there during a visit here today (Thursday) by a Russian envoy.

At the same time, Jordan would not accept any Russian criticism of the Kingdom's Parliament, which issued a statement last month to support of the Chechens, said the officials.

"We consider that the conflict in Chechenya is already over," said a senior official, referring to the end of large-scale battles in the breakaway republic more than two weeks ago after Russia poured in military might against Chechens seeking independence.

"Jordan considers Chechenya as part of the Russian Federation, but it believes that the way that Moscow dealt with the conflict there was not proper," added the official, who, like

other officials who spoke to the Jordan Times on the issue, preferred anonymity.

"It was an inhuman way of handling the crisis and in violation of all norms of human rights and we condemn such atrocities," added the official. Russian experts were quoted as saying in Moscow on Tuesday that at least 25,000 civilians were killed in the battle between Russian forces and Chechen fighters in the eight-week-old crisis.

Victor Posovayuk, an envoy of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, is scheduled to arrive here Thursday for talks expected to include Russian concern over the support that the Kingdom's Chechen community is extending to their kinsmen in Chechenya. The envoy is expected to hold talks with Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti.

"We expect (Moscow) to express its displeasure over some of the positions adopted by our Parliament" in support of Chechens, said the official. "But Jordan will make clear that it is not disposed to take any criticism of its parliament or the decisions adopted by its legislature."

"We have a free and unrestricted Parliament which follows democratic norms and practices, and there is no reason anyone should take up issue with its resolutions," added the official. "Voices in Parliament may or may not reflect government policy, but that does not mean that

anyone from outside the country could criticise our elected representatives."

The official and others implicitly confirmed comments by Deputy Tounjan Faisal, spokeswoman for the Jordanian Chechen community, that the Kingdom told the Chechen foreign minister, Shamsuddin Alaeddin Yousef, that Chechenya should accept a Russian offer of autonomy.

Mr. Yousef met with Royal Court Chief Marwaa Al Qasem this week during a visit to Jordan, but could not meet with Mr. Kabariti, who was attending meetings in Cairo.

"Mr. Yousef left Jordan with a message that Chechenya should submit to the Russian offer of self-rule," Ms. Faisal told the Jordan Times.

The deputy quoted Mr. Yousef, who was sent abroad by Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev to drum up support for the Chechen cause, as expressing hope that Jordan would continue to extend humanitarian assistance to Chechens.

In talks with Mr. Posovayuk, Mr. Kabariti and other Jordanian officials are expected to seek ways to help Jordanian of Chechen origin detained by Russian forces and also those stranded in other republics surrounding Chechenya after they lost their travel documents.



TRADE TALKS: Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abdul Ragheb (left) and U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ronald Brown address a joint press conference in Amman on Wednesday after a brief round of talks on U.S.-Jordanian trade and economic ties (see page one) (photo by Yousef 'Alman)

## Chechens to quit Grozny HQ

SHALI, Russia (Agencies)

Chechen rebels have decided to withdraw their military headquarters from Grozny but will keep fighters in the city, an aide to Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev said on Wednesday.

"A decision was taken to move the headquarters of the armed forces outside Grozny," Movliad Udugov, head of Chechenya's information service, told reporters. "Special assault groups will remain in the city. They have the task of waging military activities there."

The announcement came as Russian forces fighting since Dec. 11 to crush the Chechen secessionist drive consolidated their hold on Grozny. The Russians drove independence fighters to the city's southern fringe, Chechen guerrillas said.

Russian artillery and warplanes pounded the rebel positions on the southern outskirts of Grozny overnight Tuesday and on Wednesday.

Rebel fighters denied that the capital was on the point of falling under total Russian control and said fighting was continuing, mostly involving hit-and-run raids on Russian units by small bands of Chechens.

But refugees who had fled the battle for Grozny have begun returning to Russian-held parts of the city from villages to the north which are under the control of pro-Moscow Chechen forces.

In Brussels, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Secretary-General Willy Claes has signalled a tougher line with Moscow over Chechenya, saying the crisis was not purely Russia's internal affair.

He played down a U.S. plan for a special body to keep relations on track.

"We cannot accept that Russia sees the Chechenya problem as an internal problem... we don't want to isolate Russia but Russia could isolate itself," Mr. Claes said in an interview with the Belgian financial daily Tijd published on Wednesday.

Mr. Claes stressed the alliance wanted to keep open a dialogue and urged Moscow to sign two documents currently on the table setting out a post-cold war framework for relations, but held up by a spat over NATO's plan for eastwards expansion.

Mr. Claes' comments on Chechenya represent a significant hardening of the position of Western countries which have hitherto publicly stressed Russia's problem in Chechenya as a purely domestic concern.

Alliance diplomatic sources said the comments resulted from Western frustration at the continuing crisis in the rebel region and Moscow's apparent inability to act on international concern over its heavy-handed behaviour.

In the interview Mr. Claes

distanced himself from proposal last weekend by U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry for a standing commission with Russia to smooth relations as the alliance presses ahead with expansion plans in Eastern Europe.

"It might be useful to establish some sort of standing consultative commission to provide formal structure for our NATO-Russia relationship," Mr. Perry told the Wehrkunde conference, an annual security policy forum in Munich.

While repeating NATO's willingness to keep open a dialogue, Mr. Claes said it was too soon for such a move and said outstanding business should first be cleared up.

The European Union (EU) wants the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to send a second mission to Chechenya to help end human rights abuses in Russia's breakaway region, France said Wednesday.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Richard Duque, speaking in the name of the EU because France currently holds its presidency, said the OSCE must fulfil its mandate "to end violations of human rights and to prepare free and fair elections."

"We would like a new mission to be sent without delay. We are in contact with Russian authorities on the subject," he told a regular briefing.

## Turkish fighter crashes near Rhodes

ATHENS (Agencies) — A Turkish F-16 fighter being chased by Greek jets crashed into the sea Wednesday but the pilot ejected safely and was rescued. Greece said the aircraft would be flown back.

The Defence Ministry accused the Turkish plane of violating Greek airspace and said the single-engine jet apparently suffered a mechanical failure, Turkey said the jet was over international waters.

It crashed into the Aegean Sea near the resort town of Lindos on the southeastern side of the island of Rhodes, which is within sight of the Turkish coast.

The two nations — both North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies — have tense relations because of territorial disputes and the divided island of Cyprus.

A Greek air force helicopter rescued the pilot, Mustafa Vildirim, and flew him to a Rhodes hospital. He was in good condition and plans were made to fly him back to Turkey's Dalaman air base late Wednesday, the Defence Ministry said.

In Ankara, the Turkish military said the plane was flying over international waters. It said the plane crashed because of mechanical failure during a training flight, but made no mention of a chase.

Greek Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis said the incident had "no particular political background."

"The accident of the F-16 happened when the plane was normally returning" to Turkey and "not while it was being intercepted."

He said that Turkish aircraft often violated flight rules and the Greek airspace in the region.

Two Greek Mirage-1 intercepted four Turkish F-16 in an area under Greek authority, airforce spokesman Panayotis Karabelas said. But in Ankara military officials said the plane was on a training flight in international airspace when it crashed at 11:37 a.m. (0937 GMT).



## Latvian MP arrested for disorderly conduct

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A member of the Latvian parliament was arrested here Sunday following an altercation and was released the following day, the State Department said. State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelly said the lawmaker, who did not have diplomatic immunity, was accused of disorderly conduct and is still in the United States. She did not disclose his identity. The Baltic News Service said the president of the Latvian Diet, Anatoli Gorbunov, identified the lawmaker as Zigurds Tomins, the deputy speaker. The Latvian embassy here refused all comment Tuesday, saying it was a private matter.

## Russia's population dwindles

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's population declined further last year and officials blamed the decrease on the persistent economic crisis, a news agency reported. According to the State Statistics Committee, the population of Russia fell by 124,000 last year and comprised 148.2 million people as of Jan. 1, 1995. In 1993, it dropped by 308,000 people. "Crisis developments in the economy entailed a decline in standards of living, exacerbation of the whole complex of social problems and resulted in the decrease of birth rate and the increase in mortality," Genady Melnikan, Russia's labour minister, told the ITAR-TASS news agency. According to government figures, Russia's death rate rose by 8 per cent in 1994 to 15.6 deaths per 1,000 people, while the birth rate remained unchanged at 9.4 births per 1,000 people. Last year, the number of deaths amounted to 920,000, and the population would have decreased even more, he is not for a growing influx of immigrants from the former Soviet republics. "People postpone plans to have children because of unstable economic situation," said Anton Inayutov, a State Statistics Committee expert. "On the other hand, the growing crime and the increase in deaths from bad alcohol and food lead to a stable increase in mortality." Birth and death rates were fairly stable in the former Soviet Union but the demographic situation worsened sharply in the 1990s amid the soaring inflation, falling living standards and the virtual collapse of the state-run health care system.

## Glenn Miller 'Lost Recordings' found in London

LONDON (AP) — Forgotten recordings made in London by Glenn Miller and his band for propaganda broadcasts during World War II go on sale Monday. They include snatches of Miller speaking in German, exciting music, freedom and the American way of life, according to Conifer Records. The company is releasing 26 tapes and songs in the album titled Glenn Miller — The Lost Recordings. The recordings were never issued commercially but were misplaced in a London archive until discovered by veteran disc jockey and radio presenter Alan Dell, vice president of Britain's Glenn Miller Society. The company said the recordings are believed to be the last made by the American bandleader. They were completed at the Abbey Road Studios only two weeks before he disappeared over the English Channel on Dec. 15, 1944, on a flight to Paris. The recordings include Miller classics like Moonlight Serenade and String of Pearls. The London-based American Broadcasting Station in Europe aired them as part of efforts to encourage troops of the retreating German armies to surrender to the allies. "The recordings have been digitally remastered using the latest equipment and the quality is superb, perhaps the best ever made of the famous Glenn Miller sound," said Geoffrey Butcher, an expert on Miller's life and music.

## Kabariti meets Swiss envoy, who is back after recall

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Swiss ambassador to Jordan, Gian Federico Perdoti, who returned to Amman last week following a temporary recall, met with Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Wednesday. No details were immediately available on the meeting, but it was believed that it covered the reasons for Mr. Perdoti's recall, which came after Swiss diplomats in the Middle East received death threats.

A Jordanian official said Mr. Perdoti was recalled home by the Swiss government "after it received death threats against Swiss diplomats in the Middle East, including the ambassador in Amman."

The official, who preferred anonymity, said Mr. Perdoti left Amman in mid-January despite assurances that all necessary precautions were taken to ensure his safety. Apparently, his return came after the Swiss government was satisfied with the Jordanian security measures to protect the diplomat.

The French news agency, Agence France Presse, reported that the threats were

issued by the Abu Nidal group after the Swiss government froze a Swiss bank account the name of Abu Nidal himself.

Abu Nidal's real name is Sabri Al Banna. He heads the Fateh Revolutionary Council and is one of the most wanted men in the world for assassinations of and attacks against Western and Arab diplomats and interests.

It was not immediately clear whether the Swiss freeze of the account came in line with an American decision to freeze the assets and accounts of all known extremist groups and their leaders.

AFP said Mr. Kabariti had confirmed to the agency that Ambassador Perdoti was threatened by the Abu Nidal group. According to unnamed diplomats quoted by the agency, the Swiss government had told Mr. Perdoti that his "life was in danger."

The ambassador's departure had sparked speculation in some Swiss newspapers that it was somehow connected with a possible case against the former Jordanian ambassador to Switzerland, Akram Barakat.

Mr. Barakat is accused of embezzling embassy funds.

## NATO to launch talks with N. Africa

BRUSSELS (Agencies) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) on Wednesday agreed to open a dialogue with five North African and Middle Eastern states, partly as a response to increased worries about the threat from radical movements on its borders, NATO sources said.

The sources said NATO had agreed to hold talks with Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania.

NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes said last week that Muslim fundamentalism was now as big a threat to the alliance as communism once was.

Bot a NATO diplomat said here Wednesday that Mr. Claes had only expressed his "personal views."

Early contacts between NATO and the five countries will be held here through their diplomatic envoys.

At a later stage, the five may join NATO meetings, and visits at NATO headquarters and in the five capitals may be scheduled, diplomats said.

Spain, backed by France and Italy, urged a stronger NATO stand to the face of fundamentalist unrest in some Mediterranean countries.

The French government on Wednesday appeared to quietly shelve President Francois Mitterrand's controversial idea of an international peace conference on Algeria which caused friction in Paris and angered Algiers.

Government spokesman Philippe Douste-Blazy told reporters Mr. Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur had discussed Algeria privately before a cabinet meeting.

But he did not specifically mention the conference idea and said it was up to Algerians themselves to work for a peaceful settlement of three years of civil strife.

Socialist Mitterrand last week floated the idea of European Union-sponsored talks to bring together Algiers' military-backed government and Islamic rebels.

Cabinet members, pouring cold water on the idea, have said Mr. Mitterrand had not consulted the conservative government before speaking.

His initiative prompted protests from Algiers that Paris was interfering in its internal affairs.

Violence in Algiers

The head of an armed gang operating in the Lakhdaria region east of Algiers and believed responsible for the murder of a police chief has been killed by security forces, the daily Le Matin reported Wednesday.

## Israel keeps secret veil on refugee documents

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's state archives have released hundreds of cabinet documents from the war in 1948, but struck out passages on the expulsion of Palestinians and atrocities, officials said Wednesday. The documents were cabinet records in the year from May 1948. "About 95 per cent of the passages which have not been published relate to the exodus of more than 700,000 Palestinians who fled before the advancing Israeli army or were forced out of their homes," said Yehoshua Freundlich of the archives.

They also covered atrocities committed by Israeli troops, he told AFP. "However, we have not censored general political debates about the Palestinian exodus," he added.

The government of the day discussed how to halt reprisals, which included rape, pillage and the killing of prisoners in Arab villages. Israeli historian Tom Segev said the archives had removed references to a statement by David Ben Gurion calling for the expulsion of 100,000 Arabs from the Galilee region. "Ben Gurion proposed on Sept. 26, 1948, to break a ceasefire with the Jordanian army, because he thought Israel could take advantage of renewed fighting to complete the capture of the Galilee and force out 100,000 Palestinians," Mr. Segev said. "The proposal was defeated in cabinet," Mr. Segev said.

## 130 rebels surrender, 17 killed in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — More than 130 armed rebels in northwest Iran have surrendered to the authorities over the past 10 months, the official news agency IRNA reported Wednesday. The agency, quoting an official, in West Azerbaijan province bordering Iraq and Turkey, said 17 other "bandits affiliated with grouplets" had been killed in clashes with security forces over the same period. Large quantities of weapons were seized, IRNA said. The term "grouplets" is generally used for small Kurdish rebel factions fighting the Islamic government in Tehran — notably the Democratic Party of Kurdistan in Iran (DPKI) and the Marxist Komala. Five "repentant" members of the main armed opposition group, the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, also turned themselves in and several "espionage ring" linked with Iraq were smashed, the official told IRNA. West Azerbaijan province, which has a 200-kilometre-long border with Iraq, is the scene of frequent clashes between rebels and security forces.

## Iran performs new heart transplant surgery

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian surgeons have performed a heart transplant operation, the third in as many years, the official news agency IRNA reported Wednesday. The heart of a brain-dead young girl was transplanted to the body of a 17-year-old boy suffering from heart failure in a five-hour operation. The boy's condition was "satisfactory," IRNA said. Iranian surgeons already performed two other such operations in 1992 and 1993. Human organ transplants were halted after the 1979 Islamic revolution on religious grounds. But the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a religious edict in 1986 authorising the practice. Iranian surgeons have performed some 600 kidney and several liver transplants since that date. The practice is still disputed by some conservative religious circles, who argue "Life and death is a matter decided by God," preventing many patients from undergoing such operations or donating organs. Iran already faces a shortage of human organs for transplants, according to medical sources. President Ali Akbar Hashemi appealed for donors two years ago, saying it was a "humane act."

## Sheikh's lawyer accuses judge of aiding cover-up

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Defence lawyers for a Muslim cleric and his followers accused of planning to bomb U.S. landmarks have asked for a mistrial, alleging that the judge covered up plea negotiations with a key defendant.

The arguments followed a surprise guilty plea Monday by Sidig Ibrahim Siddig Ali, the alleged mastermind of the scheme. Court records unsealed after the plea revealed that he contacted the government Jan. 23 — one week before opening statements in the trial — seeking to cooperate.

Transcripts show that U.S. District Judge Michael Mukasey appointed a separate lawyer Jan. 24 to represent him in the negotiations. Opening statements began Jan. 30.

The defendants are accused of helping to plan the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing that killed six people and wounded more than 1,000. They are also charged with plotting to bomb the United Nations and bridges and tunnels leading into New York City.

The indictment also accuses them of involvement in the November 1990 murder of radical Rabbi Meir Kahane in New York and with planning to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak during a 1993 U.S. visit.

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